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[“YOUR ANSWER IS ‘NO’?”]

THE HEARTS OF THREE GOOD WOMEN.

BY PIERRE LECLERCQ.

CHAPTER XI.

“I DETERMINED YEARS AGO TO REMAIN UNMARRIED ALWAYS.”

In the library Miss Witchwood seated herself in her favourite arm-chair. Mr. Farrands took one that stood opposite. There was a book on the library table, which he caught hold of, abstractedly and nervously turned over its leaves before he commenced to tell Miss Witchwood about the “matter of importance.”

Miss Witchwood tried to seem unconscious of his nervousness. Mr. Farrands returned the book to the table reluctantly, and began:

“It seems but yesterday, Miss Witchwood,” he said, “since you sat, a child, on that chair in this room, pleading for my assistance. You were trembling then—were frightened at

your own courage. It is many years ago. We have changed positions. Now I plead. Now I tremble.”

“I cannot conceive the reason for your doing either, Mr. Farrands.”

“I am wrong,” he said, “in recalling that interview of old. I am anxious that you should forget it.”

“I can never forget it, Mr. Farrands—can never forget your great kindness on that occasion.”

“You owe me no thanks, Miss Witchwood,” he said, a little bitterly. “Your gratitude distresses me. You magnify the obligation. There was none. The sum I lent you was nothing to me. The virtue of an action is not to be measured by the good it effects, but by the intention of the doer, or the trouble that the action costs him. I repeat, the sum was nothing to me. I repeat, you owe me no thanks.”

“Good! Be satisfied. Since you desire it, Mr. Farrands, I will forget. Proceed.”

“It is not an easy matter, as you can see, for me to obey you,” he said, with a faint smile. “My considerable vanity and pride make me look down on the whole world. With you I always find myself in a new position, and with you only. I look up to you. I know you, Miss Witchwood, to be totally devoid of all the follies

of your sex, and I, who fancy myself to be the intellectual superior of everyone, feel my mind bowing in humility to yours. Miss Witchwood, you are so perfect that I, with all my conceit and pride, feel that my very respect and admiration for you are almost insults.”

“Indeed!” returned Miss Witchwood, rather coldly. “Say, rather, that your present expression of them is an insult. That I possess your respect and admiration pleases me, but I would rather you allowed me to understand them, Mr. Farrands.”

“I beg your pardon! I beg your pardon!” She repented of her last speech. Mr. Farrands’s unusual manner and extraordinary words distressed her. His hand was on the table. She lightly touched his hand with her own and said:

“You have something to tell which you fear will offend me?”

“Yes.”

“You know that I would consider an offence of yours more leniently than the offence of another; do you not, Mr. Farrands?”

“Thank you, Miss Witchwood.”

“Then risk my anger, and tell me all, or let us end this interview now!”

“Miss Witchwood,” said the banker, his nervousness lost for the time in his earnestness,

"for seven years I have watched you and studied you. For seven years I have been on the point of saying what I am going to say now. The more I studied you the more firm became my conviction that there breathed no man worthy of you. Your superiority frightened the words from my lips. Oh, Miss Witchwood!" his voice suddenly breaking into the voice of supplication, "you cannot imagine the revolution you have caused in my nature; no mad boy could feel towards you as I, man of the world, feel. Miss Witchwood," his voice lowered to a whisper, "will you accept me as your husband?"

Miss Witchwood did not blush. While he had been speaking she had been tapping her fingers a little impatiently on the library table; now that he had finished she placed her hand very gently on his.

His head was bowed. The haughty indolence and the responsibility and the respectability had left him.

For seven years he had hoped and feared alternately concerning her answer to that question he had just asked. He knew her answer when her hand touched his.

"I never suspected this, Mr. Farrands. I never encouraged it. I am extremely sorry. You hurt me when you speak so meanly of yourself and so highly of me. I am flattered by your offer, I am indeed; but you must have known what my answer would be."

"Your answer is 'No'?"

"It is, Mr. Farrands," she said; "but please do not speak to me in that way, as if your heart were broken. For boys and girls this is well enough, but not for you; not for me. If you could see yourself now, you would say, 'This is contemptible.'"

Miss Witchwood's treatment of Mr. Farrands's declaration did Mr. Farrands good.

"Perhaps you will give me a reason, Miss Witchwood," he said.

"Certainly, Mr. Farrands," she answered. "I will say nothing about love though, if you please. I shall only understand your offer in this way. 'Will you marry me?' I reply: 'No, I thank you.'"

"And why?"

"I am coming to that," she said, calmly and lightly; "though before I crush you with my reasons I will give you this consolation, as a support to aid you to bear the weight of them—I never cared for a man as much as I care for you."

His hand moved towards hers.

"No! no!" she laughed; "as a friend, as a brother, as anything you choose, excepting as a lover. Seriously, Mr. Farrands, I am not affectionate. Candidly, Mr. Farrands, I understand nothing about the love you speak of. You say, or rather you mean, 'I love you.' Good! I love you in return in the only way of which I am capable. Your friendship is extremely dear to me; I should be sorry to offend you; I should grieve acutely if you were to die, and so on. Be consoled; if I were inclined to marry, I would marry you."

"Then your objection is to marriage, and not to me, Miss Witchwood?"

"Exactly," she replied.

The banker could not understand her. There was heartlessness in her words, and he knew her sufficiently well to know that heartlessness with her must be assumption.

"Understand me, Mr. Farrands. I do not love you, because I suppose I am not adapted to the passion. I like you very much. I beg of you to rid yourself of this sentimental, romantic nonsense about me, and I trust that we shall still be friends—better friends even than we have been. I refuse to marry you because I determined years ago to remain unmarried always."

"May I ask why?"

"Yes; but I shall not give you all my reasons," she replied. "I like to be my own mistress, to lead my life in my own way. To be happy I must be wholly independent. I am extremely happy here where I was born, where, in all probability, I shall die. Any change would necessarily be for the worse. Another reason—I dislike your sex generally, theoretically. Another reason, Mr. Farrands, is my eye—my

brain is weak and my heart is small, perhaps, as my little frail pet fills them both. No! I know what you would say, Mr. Farrands—'you would be a father to her.' Thank you very much; I would rather keep her entirely to myself. There!" she said, hurriedly, "I have given you a number of reasons. Forget them, and remember one only—I determined years ago to remain unmarried always. I refuse to marry you for one reason then."

"What is that?"

"J'ai dit, Mr. Farrands!" she replied.

Mr. Farrands was not surprised at Miss Witchwood's refusal. It was the expectation of it which had kept him silent for those seven past years.

Mr. Farrands from boyhood had exercised marvellous self-control. His love for Miss Witchwood was the one passion which he had allowed to grow unchecked. His love for Miss Witchwood was consequently very wild and strong.

Mr. Farrands, however, was not heartbroken at Miss Witchwood's refusal, for two reasons. Firstly, he believed her statement, "I never cared for a man so much as I care for you," thoroughly; and secondly, he felt that some cause unknown to him had brought about her refusal of him.

For the first time since he had known her her words and manners had seemed unreal. From the beginning of that interview to the end his shrewdness whispered to him, "Miss Witchwood is acting."

Mr. Farrands, by a great effort, collected himself. He gathered in his haughty indolence, his responsibility, and his respectability, and putting them on again, rose from his chair, quite Mr. Farrands externally once more.

"Is there a likelihood of your changing your mind, Miss Witchwood?" he asked, with a faint smile.

"You have known me many years, Mr. Farrands. What is your opinion?"

Mr. Farrands took another path.

"May I ask the question, 'Will you be my wife?' six months hence?"

"Why should you, Mr. Farrands?" she replied; "you have asked that already. One question can only have one answer. I have given it. Pray let us pursue the subject no further."

"Grant me this, Miss Witchwood—pray grant me this!" he said, earnestly.

"Mr. Farrands, pray do not be so ridiculous. I shall grant you no such thing. If you like to ask the question a second time I have no doubt I shall repeat my answer. I am not mistress of your tongue. If you repeat your question six months hence I shall be bound in civility to answer it, as I would answer any other question on any other subject."

"Thank you," he said.

"I suppose," she continued, rising from her chair, with a short sigh of relief, "that this very undignified interview is at an end; but I suppose it is my duty first to warn you, as if you were a romantic little boy, not to delude yourself with false hopes. Now, my very dear friend, give me your arm, if you please, and oblige me by not threatening to drown yourself before you have conducted me to the drawing-room. I really require your assistance, for I have led a very peaceful life, you know, and your dreadful 'sensationalism' has given me a headache."

Miss Witchwood could be an "enigma," too, when she wished it.

CHAPTER XII.

"MR. OVERSIDE, YOU ARE FIGHTING AGAINST YOUR OWN INTERESTS."

SATURDAY MORNING.

It will be remembered, perhaps, that Tom Sheene had promised in his telegram to dine at Pondcourt House on Saturday evening, to the end of advising Mrs. Barrycourt on the purchase of an annuity for her Bombay grandson.

Breakfast at Pondcourt House was a very delightful thing. Breakfast was Miss Witchwood's

favourite meal. If her beauty had not been too great to flatter one would be inclined to say that she was lovelier in the morning than at any other time.

Once Godfrey had, like most young gentlemen who have played pranks with their constitutions, regarded breakfast as a mockery. Not so now. Miss Witchwood, arrayed in her pretty morning dress, her magnificent health, and her never-changing beauty, positively gave him an appetite.

Miss Witchwood pouring out the coffee was a more charming morning refreshment than the coffee itself. Persons who partook of breakfast under Miss Witchwood's presidency generally went through the remainder of the day on good terms with themselves and everyone else. So, although Mr. Farrands had passed a very restless night he was in every way more companionable at breakfast than he had been at dinner. He had weighed the probabilities of Miss Witchwood changing her mind when he came to repeat the question of last night, and had arrived at no result, principally because he could not divine the unknown cause which had influenced her throughout the interview. Miss Witchwood, the banker implicitly believed, had been acting. Miss Witchwood, he rightly argued to himself, would not do such a thing unnecessarily. It was therefore apparent to him that the unknown cause, or in other words the reason she had found for her assumption must be discovered before he could at all accurately compute his chances "six months hence."

His love for her was an infinitely more serious affair than are the loves of most men, and not only because the object of it was as infinitely superior to most women. It seemed to him that all those warm passions and sentiments which it had been his pride to subdue were like a disease imperfectly cured, which only disappears from one spot to find its way to another and more vital one. It seemed to him that all those passions and sentiments had revolted against his command, and asserted their independence under the leadership of his love for Miss Witchwood.

He had told her that she had wrought "a revolution in his nature." He had spoken the simple truth.

Mr. Farrands took his breakfast calmly, made one or two well-acted jokes, and behaved himself generally with affability, but Mr. Farrands was nevertheless wondering whether he would scatter his respectable brains over his respectable carpet if Miss Witchwood answered him six months hence as she had answered him last night.

Miss Witchwood was even more good-natured than usual. To Mr. Farrands she was particularly amiable. She seemed to have forgotten the interview in the library entirely.

Mr. Farrands's mental rebels gazed during breakfast on their leader with such admiration that Mr. Farrands seemed inclined to think that the possession of the faintest hope that Miss Witchwood would one day be his was ample compensation, for all the silent suffering he had undergone.

Altogether the breakfast was so enjoyable that morning that they lingered over it a quarter of an hour longer than usual, which just rendered it impossible for Mr. Farrands to catch the train, by which he had intended to journey to London. The next train left Pondcourt at two o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Farrands said he would go by that.

"Mr. Overside has kindly offered to accompany me to the station," he said.

Godfrey was not naturally inquisitive, yet he was very curious to know what the banker had to say to him. Recalling Mr. Farrands's manner during that twenty minutes after dinner when they had been left alone, Godfrey was inclined to believe that the interview in the library (the circumstances of which he was ignorant of, except that he knew the subject under discussion had not been the failure of the bank) was but a sort of preface to the coming interview on the road to Pondcourt railway station.

Miss Witchwood was very fond of books. So

was Mr. Farrands. While Godfrey gave Miss Elworth her customary drawing lesson, Miss Witchwood and the banker inspected certain old volumes which Miss Witchwood had lately purchased.

Quite unaccountably Mr. Farrands grew more hopeful as the day progressed. Miss Witchwood invited him to stay lunch and return to town by the six p.m. Mr. Farrands politely refused. On second thoughts Mr. Farrands politely accepted.

At about five o'clock in the afternoon Mr. Farrands, Mr. Overside, and Mr. Farrands's man, who carried Mr. Farrands's dress things in an alarmingly respectable portmanteau in one hand and an equally reputable travelling rug in the other, started for the railway station.

"In six months!" Mr. Farrands whispered to Miss Witchwood at parting.

Miss Witchwood laughed.

"But you will pay us another visit sooner than that, will you not?" she said.

"Oh! yes."

"An entirely unromantic visit, mind!"

"Yes; I promise."

"Thank you," she said, with another laugh, adding, in a whisper, "I am always glad to see Mr. Farrands, but I strongly object to MASTER Farrands. You were MASTER Farrands last night, you know."

It was a very cold afternoon. The banker and Godfrey walked side by side pretty briskly. The man kept at a highly respectful distance in the rear.

Mr. Farrands opened the conversation without delay, and with something less of that cool, patronising tone which so distressed Godfrey.

"Mr. Overside," he said, "I think I may congratulate you on the new leaf which you promised to turn over some little time ago. Miss Witchwood speaks very satisfactorily of you. Miss Witchwood is a woman of the world. I think I may say that I have tried to be a friend to you—that on more than one occasion you have deeply disappointed me. Your success at Pondcourt House is extremely gratifying to me."

Godfrey was about to interrupt, but the banker stopped him by continuing:

"I attribute the improvement in you," he said, "to that very sensible resolve of yours to marry. It has given you a purpose to work for—it has—in short, it has improved you. If I recollect rightly, I a little wounded your feelings last evening in speaking carelessly of the young person to whom you are engaged. I beg your pardon."

Godfrey in his heart believed that the banker was insincere, yet he could never hear those words, "I beg your pardon," and remain unaffected.

He immediately commenced to tell Mr. Farrands that there was no necessity to apologise, but the banker very soon interrupted him again.

"I have often told you, I think, that I desire your welfare," said the banker, slowly and impressively. "I have told you also that I think that marriage will benefit you. You have turned over a new leaf, and have given me much satisfaction; but you are a young man, Mr. Overside, and the merest puff of wind may blow it away and bring the old one uppermost."

"I think not, sir."

"I think with you," returned Mr. Farrands; "yet it would be well to render it more unlikely."

Mr. Farrands seldom indulged in metaphor. Godfrey was so surprised at his doing so now that he quite failed to catch the banker's real meaning.

"By what means, Mr. Farrands?" he asked.

"The simplest," replied the other. "Tell me, please, Mr. Overside, what one naturally does when one wishes to prevent any document from being blown away and lost?"

Godfrey laughed.

"One generally puts a paper-weight upon it, I think," he said.

"Exactly," returned the banker, "and I strongly advise that you should put a paper-weight upon your new leaf as soon as possible."

"I am afraid that I am rather dull," said

Godfrey, "for I really cannot translate your 'paper-weight,' Mr. Farrands."

"The paper-weight that I advise," replied the banker, "is Miss—Miss Sheene."

Godfrey laughed again. The banker had often been unfathomable to him, but never so completely as now.

"I am delighted, sir, that your advice coincides so agreeably with my inclinations and intentions," said Godfrey, "and I shall follow your advice as soon as I possibly can."

"There, Mr. Overside, lies the important point," said Mr. Farrands. "As soon as you possibly can. You will understand, I am sure, my motive in questioning you: When do you purpose marrying this young lady?"

"If all continues well down here," answered Godfrey, "I shall marry Miss Sheene in a year from now."

"A year is a long time, in your case, I think."

"It is longer than I wish for, sir," answered Godfrey, "but it cannot be helped. In a year I shall have saved something like a hundred pounds from my salary. A hundred pounds is a good start."

"Possibly," said Mr. Farrands, "but your future will be precarious. You know, of course, that you cannot take your wife to live with you at Pondcourt House."

"Yes, I know that well enough," answered Godfrey, with a laugh. "These are my views, Mr. Farrands. Remain at Pondcourt House for one year. Resign the appointment. Marry Miss Sheene, and work hard."

A short period of silence.

"Precarious!" said the banker. "My advice is, marry immediately."

"Impossible, sir!"

"Sir," said Mr. Farrands, "I am, as I have said, much pleased with you. I am anxious that you should marry quickly, that you should obtain a better engagement than you have now, that you should commence life from an advanced point, and in earnest. Mr. Overside, I respect the memory of your dead parents. I will immediately advance you any reasonable sum of money that you like to name, repayable on whatever terms best suit you, if you prefer it should be a loan and not a gift."

"May Heaven reward you for your goodness to me," said Godfrey, with emotion.

"You accept my offer?"

"No," answered Godfrey; "I refuse it. I will place myself under no fresh obligations to you. You have been a good friend to the boy, the man will work for himself unaided. Mr. Farrands, I deeply thank you. Blame my pride, or whatever it is, as you will. I must refuse your noble offer."

Godfrey looked straight ahead while he said those words, else, even in that dim, wintry afternoon light, he would have seen and been astonished at the extraordinary expression which his words brought to his companion's un-wrinkled face. Rather, let us say, two expressions; the first, one of the heartiest gratification; the second, one of the bitterest disappointment.

"Mr. Overside, you are fighting against your own interests; you are darkening your own prospects."

"I am very sorry, sir. I refuse your offer."

"Mr. Overside, although I condemn your—your folly in refusing, I am ready still to effect the desired result in another way. Finish the pictures which you have on hand; you have some time to spare, and I will purchase them, or procure their being purchased at a high price."

"Once more I thank you. Once more I must refuse," answered Godfrey.

"This is sheer childishness," said Mr. Farrands. "I will not accept your refusal. There is no obligation in the matter. Being a man of wealth and position I propose to employ the little interest I possess in such affairs towards obtaining a good market for your work. I shall expect a letter from you in a week's time, Mr. Overside, on this subject. Reconsider it, and let

me have your re-considered decision. For the present, let the subject be closed."

In due time they arrived at the railway station.

"Consider well on what I have been saying," Mr. Farrands said, just as the train came in sight, "and do not rely too surely on remaining at Pondcourt House for a year. Miss Elworth is changeable. A thousand unexpected events may happen before the year is out. For instance," he added, a little uneasily, with his eyes fixed on the approaching train, "my interview with Miss Witchwood last night may lead to a change in Pondcourt House, which would possibly result in your departure from it. I say possibly, because one alteration invariably begets others. I therefore strongly advise you to accept one of my offers, and to make for yourself a firmer footing in life."

It seemed to Godfrey that the banker was endeavouring to vainly drag into his words certain ones which would not fall in naturally. Godfrey was right. Seeing that the train was only a hundred yards from the platform, Mr. Farrands spoke the certain words by themselves, the effect of which was very sudden.

"It is likely that Miss Elworth—I mean it is likely that Miss Witchwood may marry before the year is out."

"Oh! indeed!" said Godfrey. "I hope you will have a pleasant journey to London, sir."

The train stopped at the platform.

"Yes," said the banker, taking no notice of Godfrey's wish. "It is very probable that she will become my wife."

"Indeed!" said Godfrey again, not knowing what else he was expected to say.

"Yes," said Mr. Farrands.

Two minutes after which "yes" he and his man were journeying to London and Godfrey was walking at a brisk pace back to Pondcourt House.

So briskly indeed did he walk and so busily had his late conversation with the banker set his thoughts to work that when he deemed himself halfway towards his destination he found that he was considerably more than half a mile past it. Accordingly, he retraced his steps, and when he arrived at Pondcourt House the hall clock silently intimated to him that the hour was ten minutes to seven.

He hurried to his own room and quickly dressed for dinner. Of course he had forgotten something.

While he was giving a last touch to his necktie Miss Witchwood knocked at his bedroom door.

"Are you there, Mr. Overside?" she asked.

He opened it immediately.

"I beg your pardon," he said; "I hope I have not kept you waiting. I have only just returned from the station."

She put her arm through his and they walked downstairs together. When they reached the hall Miss Witchwood laughed and said:

"Well?"

"Well," said Godfrey. "What is the matter, Miss Witchwood?"

"What is the matter with your memory, Mr. Overside?" she said.

"Good gracious!" he answered, "Mr. Sheene! Well, has he arrived?"

"Yes. He is in the dining-room."

"And do you like him?"

"You want my opinion, of course, Mr. Overside?"

Godfrey bowed.

"No!" she said. "You said he was not a gentleman. You were right. He is dreadfully vulgar. I shall be glad when he leaves us. He returns to town to-night, he says. It was extremely kind of him to come, but I shall be really more obliged to him when he has gone."

Godfrey thought of that sketch of Eve's which he had destroyed in the library fire. Perhaps, he thought, I should not have risked his coming. She may be struck with the resemblance, as I was, for an instant.

"What does your niece say to Mr. Sheene?" he asked.

"She was excellent 'friends' with him immediately," answered Miss Witchwood.

They entered the dining-room, and the group by the fire-place, of Mrs. Barrycourt, Eve, and Mr. Sheene, caused them to laugh heartily immediately they beheld it.

The whole affair was so eminently unlike Pondcourt House.

Mrs. Barrycourt had lately purchased some very fine pomegranates from Pondcourt market. They had been placed on a side table in the dining-room.

When Miss Witchwood and Godfrey entered the dining-room they beheld Mr. Tom Sheene attired in a tweed suit of loud pattern standing on the hearth-rug with his back to the fire and his big face beaming with smiles. On his right, Mrs. Barrycourt watching him and laughing at him. On his left, Miss Elworth, sitting on a stool, also watching him, and laughing at him so heartily that tears were standing in her eyes.

Mr. Tom Sheene stood on the hearth-rug with the air of a man who had been born there. He had possessed himself of three pomegranates, and after the manner of street jugglers was hurling them one after another high into the air, and catching them as they fell most dexterously, only to throw them high into the air again.

"One! two! three!—three! two! one! Hoop la! Hey presto! Prenez garde!"

The whole affair was eminently unlike Pondcourt House.

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

A SUBSTITUTE FOR CYANIDES.—The use of cyanides in coppering of steel or iron is both prejudicial to the workmen's health and expensive. M. Weil substitutes for them organic acids or glycerine, which are cheap and are not decomposed, so that the baths do not require renewal of these matters, but merely a supply of oxide of copper. The coppering is done in three different ways, according to circumstances. (1) The pieces are immersed in the bath in contact with zinc wires. (2) Porous vessels containing soda-lye are placed in the bath liquid containing the objects to be coppered, and zinc plates in the lye are connected with those objects by means of thick copper wire. The soda-lye serves continually, for when it is nearly saturated with zinc oxide it is treated with sulphide of sodium, which regenerates the caustic soda, precipitating zinc white, which may be sold. This method is very suitable for candleabra. (3) A dynamo-electric machine is used under the same conditions. M. Weil's copper-plated articles have fully approved themselves as regards durability, &c.

OZONE FORMED BY LIGHT.—An interesting discovery is announced from Paris by M. J. Dessan, a French chemist, who has been for years engaged in the study of oxygen and ozone. He finds that oxygen can be transformed directly into ozone by the rays of light. The oxygen he used in his experiments was prepared from chlorate of potash, and very pure. It was contained in a glass bell jar, which, together with all the other vessels employed, was coated with blackened paper to exclude the light and keep the oxygen dark. While in this condition the oxygen had no action in the ozone test with which it communicated; but when the rays from an oxy-hydrogen limelight were reflected upon the bell jar so as to fall upon the gas within for twenty-five minutes, the solution of iodide of potash and amidon used as an ozone test became blue, and indicated the presence of that substance. The discovery, if it be sufficiently verified, will throw considerable light on the physiological action of solar radiation.

FIREPROOF ASBESTOS PAINT.—It is said that recent experiments made with the asbestos paint have shown that when properly prepared and applied it offers an effective protection against fire, being itself fireproof. If this be the fact, the present Lord Chamberlain might signal his tenure of office by issuing a circular enjoining

the use of this paint for theatrical purposes. There can be no difficulty in enforcing the order if, as stated, the paint is susceptible of being produced in all colours and shades, and also perhaps in the form of a transparent varnish. It will be a most valuable article if it should prove to possess all the virtues attributed to it. Obviously, also, the use of this paint in hospitals and sick-rooms, wherein special perils of fire are necessarily incurred, will be recognised as an act of common prudence.

AN ANTIDOTE TO COBRA POISON.—Dr. Vincent Richards, who is experimenting on the efficacy of permanganate of potash as an antidote to cobra-poisoning, reports in the "Indian Medical Gazette" that he has obtained some very remarkable results. When permanganate was mixed with cobra poison and hypodermically injected, no fatal result followed, although a fatal dose of cobra poison was used and the mixture injected into the vein. He adds, however, that before any definite opinion can be formed many experiments will have to be performed, not only with cobra, but also with viper poison, the latter of which is a septic poison.

MAGNETIC BRICKS.—It was lately observed by Herr Kepner, at Salsburg, in the Tyrol, that some old bricks had an attractive or repellant force on a compass. From each of eight varieties of clay in the neighbourhood two bricks were moulded, and one of the two in each case was baked. The unbaked bricks had no action on a magnetic needle, but seven of the eight baked bricks proved polarly magnetic. Some further experiments have been made by Herren Kell and Trientl. Particles of powder of the magnetic bricks adhered to a steel magnet. Breunerite, mica-slate, argillaceous mica-slate, argillaceous iron-garnet, chlorite, and hornblende, were, before heating, unmagnetic, but intense heating produced a magnetic polarity, the axis of which seemed to be perpendicular to the plane of stratification. The magnetism of newly-heated rocks seems to fall off somewhat in course of time, but some slag of the Ortthal, perhaps thousands of years old, was found to be still magnetic.

THE TRANSIT OF VENUS.—The transit of Venus that takes place this year has not raised the same interest as in 1874. The photographic records secured on that occasion having proved of little value, there is no likelihood of the camera again being brought into requisition. In fact, the expeditions undertaken to observe the phenomenon will be on a much more limited scale. Germany will spend but £10,000, instead of £30,000 as formerly, and it is questionable whether the British Government will contribute anything at all.

A CANVAS BOAT.—A somewhat curious boat has been built and launched at Granton, N.B., for use by the Rev. T. J. Comber, of the Baptist expedition on the Congo. With a view to its being at once portable and durable, this boat has been made of canvas, coated with a mixture of lampblack and tar, and is stretched into shape by malacca canes, while the interior consists of three umbrella-shaped structures, which can be tightened at will; it has a partly-covered deck, and weighs only 60 lbs.; further, it can be easily taken to pieces, so as to be carried by two persons, and by a little arrangement will form a tent.

STEAM FOR PROJECTING TORPEDOES.—A "double-barrel" Thorneycroft torpedo-boat, which had previously attained the speed of 16½ knots on the measured mile, has been tested by the Vernon's officers to ascertain the practicability of using steam, instead of compressed air, for ejecting the Whitehead torpedo. It was found that the force of the impulse was about the same as obtained by the usual means, and the only advantage would be that as the "Whiteheads" are supplied to the smaller craft ready charged, the steam system of discharging them would enable air-pumps and receivers to be done away with, thus materially reducing the weights to be carried in the boat.

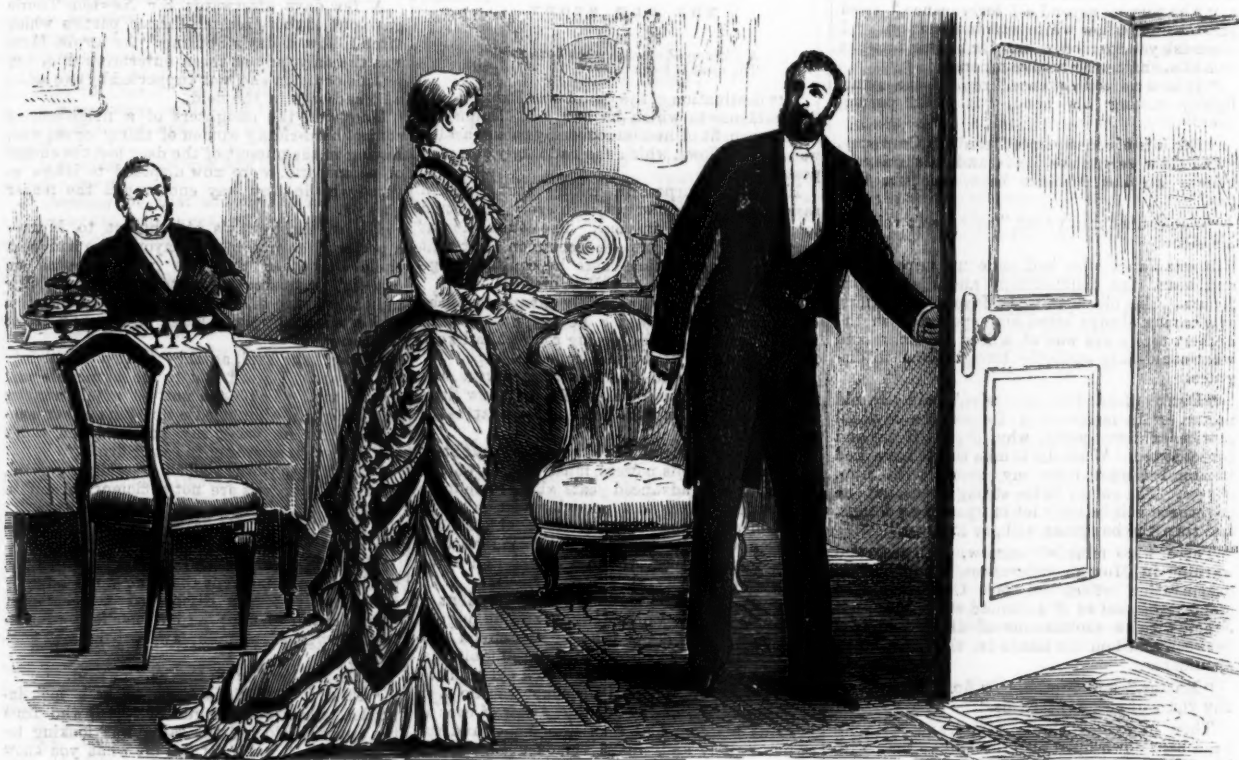
UNDERGROUND TELEGRAPHS.—A new plan of laying underground wires has been made in

Chicago. The cable is made up of twenty wires, each run through a glass tube one-eighth of an inch in diameter, and the whole enclosed in a lead pipe. This rests in a covered pine trough, three feet deep in the soil. The lead pipe is made air-tight at one end by a cap, and a slit is then cut in the pipe. Molten insulating compound being poured in, the air is driven out through the slit. The slit is then closed up by soldering.

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT FOR WAR SHIPS.—The Admiralty has been trying experiments with a view to get at the best way of reflecting the electric light without loss, a problem that is likely to concern the photographer very closely ere long. Most of our battle-ships carry the electric light for the purpose of sweeping the seas in search of torpedo-boats contemplating a night attack. It would be the aim, of course, of the torpedo launch to destroy the light apparatus as soon as it could, and for this and other motives the swift little craft is armed with small but powerful guns. The battle-ship, on the other hand, is seeking to protect its source of light behind armour, and then to bend the rays in the proper direction by some suitable apparatus. Both lenses and reflectors have been tried on board the Sultan at Portsmouth, and her captain has come to the conclusion that a dioptric lens is by far the best apparatus to employ. A reflector made of Chance's glass, and carefully silvered, proved tolerably serviceable, but the bright light travelled a much greater distance when aided by the lens. The smoke and steam of a torpedo launch can be plainly seen a mile off, for the rays strike against the vapour as it would against a solid screen.

TINNING OF PAPER AND FABRICS.—A chemist, M. Windeuran, has succeeded in tinning linen, cotton, or paper fabrics by the following process: A pound zinc powder with a solution of albumen; then he spreads the mixture on the stuff by means of a brush. After drying he fixes the layers by passing the cloth through dry steam in order to coagulate the albumen. He then passes the stuff or paper through a solution of chloride of tin. The metallic tin is reduced to an extremely thin coating on the zinc. The cloth is then washed, dried, and rolled.

WEISNEG'S LABORATORY STOVE.—This apparatus, which is installed in the chemical laboratory of the municipality at Paris, is designed to maintain a constant temperature within it. This is effected by regulating the supply of gas which heats the stove, and the regulation is effected in the following manner. A mercury thermometer tube passes into the stove from the outside, and the rising of the mercury above the height corresponding to the temperature at which it is desired to keep the stove is caused to partially close the orifice of the gas supply pipe. The result is that the temperature in the stove falls, and hence the mercury sinks to its old level. The stove is lined inside with plaques of earthenware, and a glass door is provided in front so as to allow the evaporations to be watched. While upon this subject of stoves we may mention that Herr Miske, of Dresden, has invented an acetate of soda stove, which is an application of the property possessed by this chemical of parting with its heat slowly after having been fused. It will be remembered that certain Swedish railway companies some time ago first adopted the plan of filling their foot-warmers with acetate of soda, and fusing it before placing them in the carriages, the result being that the warmers retained their heat very much longer than those filled with hot water. Herr Miske found that by using a mixture of ten volumes of hyposulphate of soda to one volume of acetate the time of cooling could be still further extended, and constructed a stove in which the heat is supplied by three flat cases of the fused salts placed between two cylinders, the outer of which is perforated with numerous small holes to allow the heated air to escape into the room. The stove runs on castors and can thus be removed from one room to another. Its portability, combined with its cleanliness, evidently renders this apparatus well adapted for use in hospitals and sick-rooms.



[MURCH PASSED HIM WITH HER EYES LOOKING STRAIGHT AHEAD.]

POWER AND POVERTY.

A NEW NOVEL.

(BY OWEN LANDOE.)

CHAPTER XVII.

MORE THAN DOUBTED.

A shallow knave, sir.
Who would lie and cheat me of my good name—
Away with him.

It was a dull, dark, wintry day in town, but at Clapham the sun shone bravely.

Brooken Hall and its surroundings, all under the influence of Decay, going hand in hand with Time, were tarnished up for a time and looked warm and cheerful, and Count Orsera, sauntering in the grounds, looked like a man who knew the value of sunshine and could bask in it whenever it could be obtained.

There was not much to bask in there it is true, for in the winter our sun lies low and there is more promise than performance in his rays. Nevertheless, the count looked warm, and strolled up and down smoking a cigar as slowly as he might have done in sunny Italy.

The air of a man at peace with himself and the world was upon him. Carking care had no record on his brow, all anxiety and unrest appeared to be banished to some distant land never to return. Peace, sweet peace! so often sought and so seldom found, seemed to have taken him under her wing, shielding him from the sorrows and bitternesses of the world.

"All goes well," he said. "I don't think there is a hitch in the programme. Let me see: funds replenished, Pierre and Euphrosia safely away, Mowbray for the present pacified. No, I don't think there is the shadow of a hitch anywhere."

He laughed, lightly hummed portions of a

drinking song, and flicked the ashes from his cigar.

There assuredly could be nothing wrong with his affairs, nothing that he, in his wisdom—and his wisdom was in its way something great—could see, so he sang his fragments of songs, gaily inhaled the fragrance of choice tobacco and basked in the meagre sunshine.

Thrice he had walked up and down the path that fronted the house when the gate bell resounded. Turning quickly, he beheld Mr. Cranbury and Murch peering through the time-worn bars of the old carriage-gate.

"Ah!" he said, hastening forward, "this is a great pleasure, and of the unexpected. Forgive me! I have not the keys of this gate, for Pierre has taken them away, but I will join you in a—ah! what do you call it?—a trice."

He made his way round to a gate generally used by the tradesmen, and where the servants passed out, and joined the merchant and his servant. With Mr. Cranbury he shook hands warmly, and Murch was honoured with a friendly nod.

"It is a pity," the count said, "that I cannot receive you, for both Pierre and Euphrosia are gone."

"Gone!" echoed Mr. Cranbury.

"Ah! my dear sir, the orders of the physician must be obeyed. One shall say to Euphrosia it is not good for you to remain here, you must go at once to something more in the South. I take him at his word, and so within an hour she is gone."

"It is a hasty departure," said Mr. Cranbury, turning his eyes away.

"Why not?" asked the count. "Why should she remain? She is an invalid—what you call a recluse almost. Last night she took leave of all her compatriots, and it is enough."

"Now we come to the point which brings me here," said Mr. Cranbury. "There are very few people about and what we have to say can easily be said. Murch has been to me with a curious story about your having had no guests last night. He says the house was lighted up,

but the whole thing was a sham. I have brought him here that he might be made fully sensible of the wicked audacity he has been guilty of."

Murch and the count were looking straight at each other, the latter, notwithstanding that he was always pale, showing a sensible diminution of colour in his face.

Of late the count had grown a beard ostensibly to protect his throat from the cold. It was a strong, thick beard, and was now of good service to him, for it partially concealed the nervous quivering of his lips, which he could not restrain.

"It is an assertion of the strangest," he said, "and strange that Murch, whom I thought a friend, should make it. What are the grounds of it?"

"Tell your story," said Mr. Cranbury, curtly, to his dependent.

Murch was troubled, but he did not shrink from the task before him. He saw that it was the word of one man against another, with the truth to be judged by one who was already angry with and prejudiced against him, but being in the right he remained firm.

In as few words as possible he related what he and Tomkins had done on the previous night, Mr. Cranbury listening with marked impatience and the count with a smile of assumed indifference.

"Your portar-beer is a muddy drink," was his contemptuous comment on the accusation conveyed in Murch's narrative. "You and this Tomkins should put your hands to the pledge."

"It is needless for me to ask if you deny this miserable story," said Mr. Cranbury to the count.

A shrug of the shoulders was the reply given him.

"He may deny it a thousand times, master," said Murch, his rugged face aglow with anger, "but he and all that belong to him are a bad lot, they are swindlers—and worse."

"Hold your tongue, Murch."

"I can't and won't, sir. I repeat it. They are

swindlers and worse, and he had a hand in the murder of poor Master John!"

"Ah! this is beyond all forbearance," cried Mr. Cranbury, now white with indignation. "I must ask your pardon, count, for having brought this idle, chattering madman here."

"It is of no consequence," replied the count, lightly waving his hand, "it is all portar-beer."

"But it is of consequence," said Mr. Cranbury, "and old a servant as he is, and faithful as I believe he has hitherto been, we part this day."

"You cannot mean that," said a soft voice at his elbow.

It was Janet who had come up unperceived and heard the denunciation and dismissal of Murch. The old man was a favourite of hers, and having always heard him spoken of in the highest terms she was at a loss to understand what could have suddenly brought him to disgrace.

"Don't plead for me, miss," said the old porter. "As master can forget the faithful service of forty years, why, then, I'll try and forget it too. While he thinks that I have lied to him I cannot earn my bread with him. I'll go. The enemy is too strong for us, but one day there will be light let in upon their doings, and then the hangman will get his own."

There were mingled sorrow, defiance, and warning in Murch's utterances, which had an exasperating effect on Mr. Cranbury, who stepped forward as if he would strike him, but Janet, with an exclamation of dismay, stepped between and laid her hands on the merchant's shoulders.

"Master," said Murch, as a final word, "one day you will be sorry for this."

Then he turned slowly round, and, with his head bent down upon his breast like a man with his full burden of sorrow, hastened away.

The count, who surveyed the scene without any apparent interest, took the merchant's arm.

"It is nothing, my friend," he said, "the portar-beer is strong and it lingers yet in the brain of our good friend Murch."

"He has never been given to drink," Mr. Cranbury answered, "and I cannot think that he has become a victim to the popular vice."

"Do not forget," said Janet, quietly, "that he has the loss of his daughter to mourn. It must have affected him."

"I did, indeed, forget it, poor fellow. Perhaps I ought not to have been so hasty with him. I will call at his house on my way to town to-morrow."

"I do not think you understand Murch," said Janet. "In his way he is proud and might not be disposed to listen to you. You appear to have charged him with some delinquency from which he cannot clear himself."

"Why think of me?" said the count, smiling on Janet blandly, who turned away with a scarcely repressed shudder.

She had never liked the smile of the count, and she liked it less that day.

"If Murch is a good fellow, and if he fuddles his poor brain with muddy liquor and tells what is not true of me, I do not blame him. Let there be no ill word between him and you, my good friend."

"It is done," said Mr. Cranbury, briefly, "and cannot be undone."

"It was my purpose to pay my last respects to Mrs. Cranbury to-day. Will the present hour be agreeable?" asked the count.

"You could not choose a better."

They fell in side by side, the count dexterously getting between Janet and Mr. Cranbury with the hope of getting a few words with the woman he had elected to marry, but with this he was disappointed. The few remarks he made remained unanswered, and during the short walk to The Knoll she kept her eyes steadily averted from him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE OLD STORY.

It is
A green-eyed monster that doth mock
The meat it feeds on.

THE destination of the count was Exmoor, and the residence to which he had sent Euphrosia for the benefit of her undoubtedly robust health was The Hollows, which she had lately obtained possession of.

He had a purpose in taking that secluded residence, and he thought it in every way fitted for the end he had in view. The count was but a man, and he fell into the common error that by going here or going there he could arrange the destiny of others as well as his own.

But he was slowly and surely advancing to the end. Ever long that which he was now seeking to avoid would soon be closing round him like a net, from which none could hope to escape.

Gifted with sound health, strong nerves, and a firm faith in his own powers, he knew little of and cared less for the weaknesses that assail so many.

He had no thought of old age, no thought of the time when his powers must fail, or of the helplessness of advanced years which come upon us as surely as the sun goes down at eve. In common with many men of physical strength and iron will he had a vain, shadowy idea that he was not like others, and thought and acted as if he were immortal.

His arrival at The Hollows was, by accident or design, in the dead of the night, and he hugged himself with the belief that he had stolen into the county unmarked by any of its inhabitants.

Along the lonely roads his quick eyes shifted from window to window; he could see no sign of living thing, but for all that a pair of eyes as keen as his own had seen him come, and the owner swiftly and silently tracked him to his lair.

It was old Reuben Stark who was out that night on his usual errand of marking down a stag for the morrow's hunt, and early in the morning just as daylight was peeping he presented himself at the Moor House.

Only two or three of the lower servants were stirring, and, on hearing that he wished to see Mr. Strongway, were very doubtful if they dare disturb their master at that hour. But old Reuben, with a boldness that amazed them, marched upstairs and went straight to the young squire's room.

Opening the door he thrust his head in without any ceremony and said:

"Ye told me to come any hour in the day or night if I had any news for 'ee, Master Strongway."

"Hallo! What is it—who's there?" cried Edgar, awakening from a sound sleep and sitting up in the bed.

"It is me, master, and I have some news for 'ee."

"Come in then, man."

"It is about The Hollows," said Reuben, sidling in cap in hand. "There is a new chap come to The Hollows, a furrin-looking party, with a bit of the devil in him as far as I could see. He thart nobody saw him," and here the old man chuckled prodigiously, "but I was among the bracken and see his white face in the moonlight."

"You are sure he went to The Hollows?"

"Master Strongway, I followed 'im there."

"You have done well, Reuben. Give me my purse from the table there."

"Lor, Master Strongway, I don't want to be paid for every little thing that I does for you and Miss Myra, seeing that working for one is working for both—"

"Certainly," interposed Strongway, "but for all that I don't think a sovereign will do you any harm."

Reuben, after a little more demurring, accepted the coin offered him, and having duly bowed and scraped left the room.

An hour afterwards Edgar Strongway had dressed and hastily breakfasted and was never-

ing about The Hollows, where he remained all the morning and got nothing for his pains.

A few days afterwards Sir Newton Thurlie gave one of those scratch dinner parties which often follow a day's hunting. As a rule, Myra was the only lady at these entertainments, but on this occasion she was supported by two ladies who had been in the field.

They were the daughters of a neighbouring squire, hard-riding women of thirty or so, who, having in the pursuit of the deer lost the chance of a husband, were now disposed to laugh at those who in any way encouraged the tender passion.

Edgar Strongway's attachment to Myra—a perfectly clear thing to anyone who had seen them together for five minutes—was an especially amusing thing to these hard-riding ladies, and the elder, Diana Charrington, with malice aforethought, scorned him as an escort to dinner.

"Now," she said, as they settled down into their seats, "I want you to be agreeable and talk to me. You need not be at all anxious about Myra if that noodle Sparkins is her companion, for he won't say half a dozen words while there is anything to enter drink."

"I'll talk to you if you like," Edgar replied, "but my poor wits are not sufficient to start a subject. May I beg of you to lead on?"

"Easily done," she said. "The mysterious new-comers at The Hollows."

He started and looked at her inquiringly, leaving for the moment that she must have by some occult means discovered the compact he had made with Myra; but her face was perfectly composed, and he saw that he was mistaken.

"The Hollows by all means," he said.

"First," said Diana, with an arch look intended to excite the anger of Myra, who from the opposite side of the table was looking towards them, "you must tell me what you know of these hermit people."

"I know absolutely nothing. I have certainly called, but I met with unmistakable rudeness."

"Just our case. It was Cherry's idea," Diana said, looking towards her sister, "she insisted that the people ought to be called upon before we knew who they were. I opposed it, but my father, who gives way to Cherry in everything, must needs rush into the bear's den and meet with what I must call a well-deserved rebuff."

"Indeed?"

"He was stopped half way to the house and his name and address taken by a surly fellow, very much as if they were going to issue a summons for trespass; but the funniest part of the story is this—that very night we received a letter from the mysterious gentleman who has come to reside among us."

Edgar Strongway's interest was now thoroughly aroused, and bending low so as not to be overheard, he said:

"Do you think you could repeat to me the contents of that letter?"

"Perhaps I could, but I won't," Diana coolly replied. "But I tell you what I will do. I have it in my pocket, and if you will make yourself agreeable in the drawing-room and help me to kill the wretched hour we shall be obliged to spend there you shall read it."

"It is a bargain," he said, with animation, and raising his eyes he encountered a reproachful glance from Myra.

A sign from him to assure her that she had no cause to be angry with him was met with an indifferent shrug of the shoulders, and leaning back in his chair he inwardly contemned The Hollows, the owner, and Diana as a triple source of his disgrace.

When the ladies began to move he made a plunge at the door and had the honour of opening it for their exit. Myra passed him with her eyes looking straight ahead, and the soft whisper he would have offered was frozen on his lips by her icy coldness.

"What on earth is the matter?" he muttered, as he resumed his seat discontentedly at the table, "she can't be jealous of the aged Diana,

and yet I can think of nothing else." By Jove! women are strange beings."

Having arrived at this sage and novel conclusion, he returned to the table, and filling his glass drank to Myra's better temper and their speedy reconciliation.

"Of course, when she knows why I am so attentive to Diana," he mused, "she will be full of repentance, and to hear the confession of her folly from her lips will be very sweet indeed."

This rumination showed how little he knew of women after all.

Confessions of that description are rarely uttered by the gentler sex, who have an admirable knack of coming out of a quarrel scot free, and leaving all the blame upon the shoulders adapted by nature to bear it.

Sir Newton Thurlie was no toper of the old school, and in half an hour the decanters had been passed for the last time and the men were on their way to the drawing-room.

Edgar Strongway would have gone to Myra to offer an explanation, and to obtain that sweet confession of repentance, but Diana Charrington skillfully intercepted and carried him away captive to an ottoman by the fire.

He went with an ill grace, although he had a hope of obtaining valuable information from her. She steadily ignored the cloud upon his brow, and rattled away in the best of humours.

"Get me an album," she said; "let us look through it and criticise the people who have been so unfortunate as to get into the photographer's hands. It is not bad fun in a small way, and acts as a good preventive to those dreadful dead-locks in conversation."

There was one close by upon a table, so close that he could reach it as he sat, and opening it he gloomily prepared himself for a dose of voluble chatter.

"A blessing on the man who invented albums," Diana said. "What a boon they have been to the Noddies, Stiffbacks, and non-entities of society, and what an opportunity he has afforded to us to say spiteful things of our dearest friends."

"And the camera, too," remarked Strongway, "what an honest thing it is. It won't give us eyes and nose that we don't possess, or hide grey hairs, or make us look twenty years younger than we are."

"It certainly is honest, too honest perhaps."

"I suppose it is possible to be too honest. But how about that letter, Miss Charrington?"

"As you are so impatient you shall see it at once on one condition."

"Name it and I will fulfil it."

"That you don't run away from me the moment you have read it."

He assented with a nod, and Diana, after rummaging in her pocket, which appeared to be filled with a variety of articles, principally of the strap and whip-handle kind, brought out a letter written in a cramped hand and handed it to him.

It ran as follows:

"The Count Orsini presents his compliments to Mr. Charrington for making an effort to honour the count with a call. While sensible of the deepest of the kindness intended the count wishes it to be understood by Mr. Charrington and all around who no doubt equally desire to be kind that these calls are distasteful and not at all desired. The count is engaged in scientific pursuits which will not admit of his receiving company, or of going out among the kindly disposed people around him. He therefore hopes he may be left to peacefully pursue the labours he is rejoiced to have in hand."

"A strange letter," said Strongway, as he turned it over in his hand. "May I take a copy of it?"

"You may keep the original of it for a week," Diana replied, "only I shall expect you not to lose it; and now that I have been so kind to you you must be my attentive cavalier for the evening."

Edgar Strongway could scarcely repress a groan, but he had made himself a party to the

compact by reading the letter. With a heart as heavy as lead he settled down to make himself agreeable.

CHAPTER XIX.

A MIDNIGHT DEED.

No darker deed
Ere cast its shadow on the moonlit plain
Or thrilled the heart of man.

MYRA and Strongway were alone in the drawing-room, Sir Newton Thurlie was at the hall door bidding the other guests good night. Myra stood on one side of a small round table twirling a bracelet upon her wrist with a disdainful air, and Strongway stood on the other side in a state of deep dejection and humiliation.

"You know, Myra," he said, "that I really could not help myself. She is not a woman to be shaken off, and I really had a good object in view."

"Ah! what are you saying?" she asked, looking up coldly.

"You know very well," he replied, with a tinge of anger, "only it pleases you to assume this know-nothing air to me."

"The agreeable evening you spent with Miss Charrington does not appear to have developed your natural courtesy. May I be excused if I say good night?"

"No, Myra, I can't let you go so, I must explain myself. Diana Charrington—"

"Diana, indeed?"

"Well, Miss Charrington if you wish it."

"I have no wish regarding it."

"Everybody calls her Diana or I should not have done it, Myra. She had a letter from that fellow at The Hollows, and I was anxious to see it—"

"So anxious that you were whispering together all dinner-time and could not leave her side for a moment all the evening?"

"But you don't understand, Myra."

"But I do understand."

"Who would have thought that you would be jealous of such a woman, Myra?"

"Jealous, indeed!" said Myra, with a curl of her lip, "that was a very bold assumption of yours."

"Will you read the letter she gave me?" asked Edgar, struggling to be calm.

"I really am not interested."

"You are interested this far, that if I find out who and what is the occupant of The Hollows, and what mystery he conceals there, that you are bound in honour to be my wife. I have your word for it."

"And I will keep my word," said Myra. She stepped lightly back. "And now that you have so thoroughly explained yourself you really must allow me to say good night."

He did not answer her, but stood with his head bent, gloomily biting his lips.

By the door Myra paused, just the fraction of a second, hoping, it may be, that he would look up or speak, but he remained silent and still, and so she left him.

Two minutes afterwards he was in the hall bidding Sir Newton good night without any signs of his recent trouble upon him. The only thing observable about him was that he was not smoking, which was an unnatural thing with him when he had a long, late walk before him.

"Won't you smoke?" Sir Newton asked.

"No, thanks, I think not," Edgar replied.

"Somehow I don't seem to fancy tobacco to-night."

They shook hands, and the baronet walked to the door, remarking what a beautiful night it was and how bright the moon looked.

Edgar Strongway replied that he would have no difficulty in finding his way home, and set out upon his road with a vigorous, elastic step.

It was part of Strongway's generous nature not to over-tax a horse, and that was why he left his tired hunter in the stable and elected to journey home on foot.

In half an hour Deerland was wrapped in silence, and for two hours remained so. Then a loud

knocking at the hall door aroused the echoes within, and a hoarse voice without was heard calling loudly for help.

The servants slept in the upper part of the house, and most of them at the back. They were tired with their day's work and were sleeping soundly. Sir Newton, too, had fallen into the deep unconsciousness which follows a day's fatigue.

Of all in the house Myra alone was awake. The repentance following an act of injustice had kept her from sleep. She was as fully conscious of the absurdity of being jealous of Diana Charrington as her lover was, but it had pleased her in her womanly discretion to be jealous once in a way, but she felt she had gone a little too far.

Suppose Edgar Strongway were really angry with her and would never come back? He appeared to be very vexed and did not look up again as she was leaving him, although she had given him a brief opportunity of showing that he was not so deeply annoyed as to meditate leaving her.

After the manner of people who have done a wrong or a foolish thing, she recalled the scene again and again, altering it here and there, and picturing it as it now could never be. There is one thing that can never be altered or wiped away, and that is the past.

For the hundredth time she was going through the quarrel with such agreeable variations that her imagination suggested when she heard the knocking and the cry below.

"Ho! there, house! Help, help!"

Her first thought was fire, and springing up she hastily donned a dressing-gown and opened the door of her room, stepping out upon the landing.

There was no smell of burning, and the house was wrapped in darkness, save where the moon shone at a small latticed window at the far end of the corridor.

"I might have been dreaming," she thought, in a state of half-unconsciousness, "or it may have been only the screech of an owl."

She was returning when she heard the cry again, louder and hoarser than before.

"Ho! there, house! Help, help! MURDER!"

It could not now be mistaken for anything but a dread reality, and with a palpitating heart she ran to the baronet's room and knocked tremulously at the door.

Sir Newton did not readily awake, and when he was aroused his ideas of things around him were for awhile confused; but at length he realised that there was a knocking at his door and that it was his daughter imploring to be let in.

With all speed he put on a little needful attire and drew back the bolt. The door opening, Myra staggered in with a face white as death.

"My child," he cried, "what is the matter?"

"I don't know why I should tremble so," she replied, "but somebody is calling outside, and I am afraid that something has happened to—to Edgar."

"Nonsense, child, what can have happened to him? Who is it that is calling?"

"I don't know. But listen—he is calling again."

For the third time the voice, with increased agony in its tone, was heard. The baronet, who was a man of iron nerve, recognised the harsh tones of his stable helper, Reuben Stark.

"Don't be alarmed, Myra," he said, "it is only old Reuben, and something may have gone wrong with some of the horses. I will go down and see him."

There was a small lamp burning in his room, for it was a custom of his never to be without a light, and bidding Myra to await his return he took the light in his hand and sauntered quietly down to the hall door.

To draw back the bolts was the work of a moment, and then he stood face to face with the old helper, whose visage was ghastly in the moonlight.

"Now, Reuben, why have you disturbed us at this hour?"

"Sir Newton, ye be wanted down by the

Black Gully, and a doctor too, in case there be need of him, not but what I think it too late."

"But who wants us there?" asked Sir Newton, testily. "Be more explicit, man; make your meaning clearer."

"Well, Sir Newton," said Reuben, "it is a bad job, but he is dead enough, poor fellow! It's cruel work to sneak behind a man and smash his head in, but it wasn't done in the Black Gully, it were done somewhere else and they dragged him there. There's the slot of big feet that may help to trace the man as did it."

"Well, who is it, man?—who is it?"

"Bend down a bit, Sir Newton, and let me whisper in your ear."

Sir Newton, with a dark terror in his heart, obeyed, and the old man standing on tiptoe, hoarsely muttered, his voice quivering as he spoke the words:

"Sir Newton, it be Master Strongway!"

(To be Continued.)

FACETIÆ.

DAEWIN ON THE ORIGIN OF MAN.—The latest "Caudal Lectures." Punch.

A DIPLOMATIC ANSWER.

LADY GODIVA: "But surely, doctor, you don't approve of those horrid æsthetic fashions in women's dress?"

THE DOCTOR: "My dear madam, so long as a woman is beautiful, she may wear whatever she likes, for me; and if she isn't, what does it matter what she wears?"

[Lady G. thinks the doctor a most delightful person, and quite agrees with him.] Punch.

BROTHER IN THE FAITH (to maiden lady, whose prospects in life have been sacrificed to rear her brother's family): "Providence will, I am sure, provide for you a good husband."

PRACTICAL SHE: "If all the same to Providence, could it be made a small annuity?"

Moonshine.

THE music composer most popular with the ladies.—Chopin (shopping). Moonshine.

RUSSIA doesn't strike us as being a particularly luscious country, but they seem to be squeezing plenty of Jews out of it just now.

Moonshine.

MRS. MUTTONHEAD wants to know why the legislature allows the Sewage Canal to exist. She asks, "What is the use of the ol-Factory Act?"

Moonshine.

A LA MODE DE PARIS.

PRACTICAL SHOEMAKER: "Yes, miss, all our French goods is made by two firms. Monsieur Droit makes the right boots and Monsieur Gauche makes the left ones, and I often wonders how they manage to get them so exactly alike."

Moonshine.

ONE TO UNCLE.

SMALL BOY (reading): "Uncle, what's a wiseacre?"

UNCLE (suffering excruciatingly from tooth ache with the last but one left): "A wise-acher?"—(groans)—"A wisdom-tooth."

Judy.

I CAN see you're trying to "stuff me," as the goose said to the professed cook.

Judy.

TO THE BAD.

SANDY FAIRLEY (who has just put half a crown into the church plate instead of a penny, and who is not allowed to take it back): "Weel, weel, I'll get credit for the twa an' sax in Heaven!"

THE ELDER: "Na, na; ye'll only get credit for a penny."

Judy.

YAH!

FIRST PASSENGER: "I travel third-class on principle."

Judy.

SECOND AFFABLE DITTO: "Do you, now? Well, I do it from want of principal."

Judy.

I'd rather go "without," as the sheep in the abattoir said when they were going to kill him.

Judy.

FEAR NOT.

BROWN: "Ah! that's your dog. He'd astonish any suspicious-looking party coming about, I should think."

JONES: "Oh, you needn't be afraid as long as I'm with you, old fellow."

Fun.

CUR-FIDITY.—A billiard match for £1,000.

Fun.

NEVER SAY "DYE!"—Certainly not. Every-one with any gumption alludes to it as hairwash.

Fun.

IT IS NOT THE FACT

THAT the proper way to open a deadlock is with a skeleton key.

THAT a dark lady cannot be said to belong to the fair sex.

THAT all machinery wheels do always travel in cog.

THAT the best way to turn people's heads is to come into church late with creaking boots.

THAT a new covering is being provided for all the New Year bells that have peeled.

THAT a chimney-sweep likes his trade because it suits him.

THAT the best way to have your eyes opened is—by getting married.

THAT when a man stands on his dignity he is any the taller for it.

Judy.

IL-LY PROBABLE.

IF a stone that doesn't hit its mark is a missile, mustn't one that does hit it be a hit-ile?

Funny Folks.

A POOR ARTIST IN CHALK.—Our milkman.

Funny Folks.

THE "HIRE EDUCATION OF WOMEN."—Training them for domestic service.

Funny Folks.

"LOCAL OPTION."—Living wherever you please.

Funny Folks.

THE MODERN ARIEL.—"On the acrobat's back I fly."

Funny Folks.

BELLA'S HERO:

A STORY OF

THE WELSH MARCHES.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LOST FOUND.

COLONEL FITZ EUSTACE and Tom Monkton sat in the private lounging-room of the former, engaged in conversation upon topics as various as the interests of the speakers were manifold and far-fetched; and were it not for the imputation of telling tales out of school—of needlessly tattling—we could reveal a few very strange adventures which were then and there talked over—adventures that might have deeply interested men high in rank and power—the narration of which would have struck with wondrous familiarity upon the sense of many a sufferer—and which Sir Harry, in his office at Scotland Yard, would have given half a year's salary to hear. But they were safe from intrusion. The only person whom they had to dread, in that respect, had come, all unknown to them, filled his budget of information, and gone.

The wine had flowed freely, but not in sufficient quantity to move the heads of such hardened drinkers; and now, late in the evening, they had arisen to their feet, with glass in hand, the visitor having determined that it was time for him to go. He had no desire to remain and risk detection by the keen-eyed grooms.

"Here's to success!" cried Tom, holding his goblet on high.

"Success! success!" responded the colonel.

"We are bound to conquer it!"

"Ay," added the other, as he replaced his glass upon the table, "you are safe, old fellow. All Dick and I could do has been done; so you will have no more dread of young Conway. I think we managed that pretty well. And, you will understand—we have settled with old Pungle for a full month."

"And the youngster will be kept in absolute seclusion?"

"Yes. That was specially stipulated. Ho! There is no power of search in England can find him!"

Tom then turned to the mirror and arranged his wig and beard, after which he said, half-playfully but yet with earnestness:

"By the way, colonel, when do you plan to have your marriage come off?"

"Just as soon as possible. If I could know—"

Unlooked-for help was at hand. He had spoken thus far, when the door communicating with the hall was opened, and Jerry Trimble entered, his freckled face bearing unmistakable sign of rare intelligence.

"Well, Jerry! What has happened?"

"A visit of the doctor, my lord!"

"Ha!"

"Yes, my lord!"

"Pshaw! Let the LORDING be for now and go on with the facts. What are they? Who is sick?"

"Oh! don't pinch my arm quite so affectionately. So—that is better. Yes—the doctor came more than an hour ago, and went at once to the library, where the marquise sat; and he has but just gone. There's a wonderful work on mixing medicine! I hung on upon my post, and waited for the valet to show himself; and when he came, I pumped him. Poor fellow! He was really weeping. And no wonder. The doctor has told Lord Mendon that he cannot live beyond another day! At all events his days are numbered, and there is no help."

"Jerry! Look you: make no mistake. Are you sure this is so? Can you swear?"

"I can swear to the doctor's decision."

"Ah! if he should die without making a will! He has not made one yet, I am sure. We will be on the watch in the morning to see if he sends off for his lawyer."

"Aha! Now, Tom, I can answer your question more understandingly. I will have that knot tied as soon as I can bring Sir Peter to terms. He would give his consent for the wedding this very night if he knew Roderic Graham were surely dying. But I can wait a day. I shall labour with the old aristocrat and seek to make him papa-in-law to a marquise as soon as I can. You shall know when it is coming, that is if you are anywhere near."

"Near!" repeated Monkton, with elevated eyebrows. "Why, bless your body, dear man! you did not suppose I was going far beyond your reach until this business was settled, did you?"

"N—n—o!—a—of course not. But—Tom, you must be careful. There's more suspicion than you think for."

"Don't fear for me, colonel. I will be as unobtrusive as a mouse while the cat is about, only let me know when the wedding is to come off."

"You shall know certain."

"And, old boy, you won't forget the POWRY!"

"You may be sure of your share of that, Tom. I give you my word. All that comes through that source shall be faithfully divided. And now, my dear boy, do be careful! And keep Dick in leading-strings. They are moving smartly at Shrewsbury, and Sir Harry will very soon send down a force from Scotland Yard to search for the freebooters of this section. Tom! if Sir Harry's boys once set their eyes on you in your natural guise be sure they'll nab you."

"Rest easy, colonel. I will be propriety itself, and I will answer for Dick also."

"Good. Au revoir!"

And Jerry Trimble went out with the visitor, taking him by a rear way, himself bringing the horse and seeing him safely off.

On the following morning, as soon as he had broken his fast, Col. Fitz Eustace put himself

into fair visiting costume, and set forth on his way to Waldron Hall, which he reached towards the middle of the forenoon, where he found Sir Peter busy with two officers from Shrewsbury. When at length Dr. Tobey was announced the colonel withdrew, feeling that the old family physician might hesitate about speaking plainly in the presence of one to him a comparative stranger. So Tobey when he entered the drawing-room found the baronet alone.

"Ah! doctor. You know I am always pleased to greet you; but now I have called upon you for information. I am anxious concerning our new marquis."

"And well you may be!" broke in the doctor. "Well you may be, Sir Peter. Ah! poor fellow, it is hard. Just as he was ready to assume the reins and start out into a useful life. For I can assure you, Sir Peter, he would have done his duty well and truly. He was prepared to leave every low and evil association and give himself body and soul to the work of making the thousand retainers and servants—tenants and friends—of Mendon happy and prosperous. But, alas! it is not to be. I was called last evening, Sir Peter, and I found him falling—falling surely and rapidly. In short, his race of life is run."

"How long can he live, doctor?"

"Well, that is difficult to say. I have given him till the close of this day, though he may live through another night; and if he can take a cordial I have prepared, and keep it on his stomach, he may stay with us still another day. But the machine is used up. His vitality is exhausted."

Sir Peter expressed his sorrow in well-chosen language, and resolved to go himself and see the young nobleman.

"You have not seen him since his father died, have you?"

"Not since the funeral."

"Yes; I meant the funeral. Well, Sir Peter, you ought to go; and I think I can assure you he will be glad to see you."

And with that the doctor took his leave, and shortly thereafter the baronet had expressed to Colonel Fitz Eustace his determination to visit Lord Mendon at once.

The colonel was at a loss how to take this. At first he could have wished that it might have been otherwise. Would the marquis, he asked himself, speak against him in Sir Peter's presence? Would he denounce him, and advise that the marriage with Bella be broken off? He could hardly think it possible. At all events, he was resolved that he would, if he could do it pleasantly, see Roderic before the baronet. He hoped he might influence him, at least, not to speak against him.

So he pretended to feel pleasure in the old man's prospective visit, and was only sorry that he could not wait and bear him company. He was safe in speaking thus, because the baronet had spoken of important business requiring his attention at his counting-house.

"It is just as well," said Sir Peter. "I shall not be able to go until afternoon. But I shall go then, certainly."

The colonel did not stop to see Bella. He went out with the host and called for his horse, and on his return to the Castle he asked to see the marquis. He sent in word by the valet, who was just carrying in a bowl of cordial.

But his lordship begged to be excused. He did not feel able to receive visitors.

So Colonel Fitz Eustace could only go to his own apartment and hope for the best.

An hour after noon Sir Peter arrived, and had been admitted to the presence of the marquis before the colonel could see him.

The greeting between Roderic and Sir Peter was very cordial, but not so hearty as it might have been. The visitor saw very plainly that his host was weak and faint and unable to bear much conversation. But he had a question to ask—not a polite one, he knew—yet he must ask it. He had come partly for that very purpose.

"My dear lord, in this unhappy situation—and I cannot tell you how I wish it could be otherwise—but in the situation as it is I sup-

pose Colonel Fitz Eustace will succeed to the Lordship of Mendon. Is it not so?"

Roderic Graham did not answer immediately, and when he did answer he was influenced by various conflicting emotions. He remembered that Sir Peter Waldron had been for years seeking to effect a union between the two families. He had tried hard to win his own hand for one of his daughters, and now, failing that—and in the event of Arthur's supposed death—he would take up with the next chance. He forgot Bella—forgot the injury he might be doing her—and remembered only the baronet's grasping greed—his almost insane desire to be father of a marchioness. And feeling thus—thus thinking—he finally answered:

"You can see as well as I, Sir Peter, that the son of Lady Elizabeth Graham must follow my father's sons. So it is, and so it must be."

"And, of course, Colonel Fitz Eustace is that son?"

"Has he not furnished ample proof? Really, my dear sir, I should be the last to deny his claim."

"But, my lord, I thought his claim was established."

"Well, is it not?"

"Do you really admit it?"

"Sir Peter, it is not for me to admit anything about it. I simply tell you, I do not deny it."

Sir Peter thought he saw where the trouble lay. Yes, he saw it plainly. The poor young man was grieved that the coronet must pass away from his family. That was it. And who could wonder? Not he, surely.

And he went away firm in the conviction that his daughter would be Marchioness of Mendon.

He met the colonel in the court, and told him that the wedding should take place as soon as the arrangements could be made.

"Let it be to-morrow."

Sir Peter could not promise that. He would confer with Bella first. But he promised that no persuasion of hers should delay the ceremony beyond the week. Brought thus to face the event, the father found himself inclined to be cautious. The colonel might come to the Hall on the morrow and they would then come to a definite conclusion.

And with this the colonel was forced to be content.

Roderic Graham must have reflected to some purpose on the subject involved in Sir Peter's visit, and in the conversation which had taken place between them.

At all events, on the evening of that day two letters, bearing the seal and crest of Mendon, were delivered at Waldron Hall, both from the marquis. One was directed to Sir Peter himself and ran as follows:

"Mendon Castle, March —, 1832.

"SIR PETER WALDRON.—Will you, in remembrance of our old friendship, kindly allow your two daughters to visit me, if I am living, on the morrow, after noon? When I call to mind the many happy hours I have spent in their society—when I remember their old-time love and affection for my wayward self—I cannot bear the thought of closing my eyes upon these earthly scenes without bidding them an affectionate adieu. I do wish to see them. Their presence will make my poor sick-room brighter. —With friendly remembrance, MENDON."

The other, directed to the Ladies Catharine and Isabel Waldron, was under the same date, and as follows:

"DEAR COUSINS KATE AND BELLA.—Come to me on the morrow. I shall probably never leave my home again in life, and I would see you before I take the dark journey to the unseen! I have written to your father, and I know he will be glad to have you come. I shall look for you at any time after noon. Do not disappoint me. With kindest remembrance of ten thousand loving passages in the times that are gone, I am your cousin, RODERIC."

It was past nine o'clock when the girls sought their father to compare notes. Bella felt slightly

uneasy, for she was sure that Roderic meant far more than he had said. She was convinced that his aim was her especial good; and, feeling thus, she had an instinctive dread of her father's opposition.

But she was to be happily disabused. The baronet was rather pleased than otherwise, and, after the conversation which he had held with the marquis, this appeared to him like a desire on the young nobleman's part to make all pleasant and agreeable. At all events, he wished his daughters to go, and he had concluded that he would not press Bella in relation to the marriage until she should have returned from her visit to Mendon.

Yes, he would have them go, as the marquis had invited. And the more he thought of it the more he was pleased. It was a frank and voluntary offer on the marquis's part of confidence and esteem and of amity between the two families.

And might it not be that his lordship sought to make the girls familiar with Mendon before he had done with it? Did not Roderic Graham really desire to look upon the future mistress of Mendon before he should have closed his eyes upon its historic scenes for ever?

The thought was pleasant, and, with vivid imaginings and anticipations of more good than he could clearly define, he returned word that his daughters would give themselves the pleasure of accepting his lordship's flattering invitation.

It was late in the evening, past ten o'clock, when a man on foot knocked at the door of the porter's lodge at Mendon and desired admittance, and he also asked for Mark Dowler, the steward.

Mark was called, and upon arriving at the lodge he recognised the detective whom he had met in the lawyer's office at Bishop's Castle—Philip Munn. His heart bounded wildly as he obeyed the visitor's sign and followed him a short distance outside the gate.

"Oh! my boy, my boy!"

It was all he could cry as he opened his arms and caught George Conway to his bosom.

"Dear old Mark, I am glad to see you once more."

"And if you should kill me I shouldn't care, Master George. Oh, how I have hated myself! If I hadn't lost my head, if I hadn't just stewed my miserable brain in rum, they never would have got away with you as they did."

"Hi! old fellow, you were a little mellow that last night, eh? I thought so, but say not another word. In no way under the sun were you to blame, nor could you have prevented what happened had you been ever so sober. So hold your tongue from further repining and give me joy! Ay, dear old friend, give me joy for the liberty you have wrought. Bless your dear old soul! where would I have been now but for you? Haven't you done the whole of it? Wasn't it your information that sent these good angels after me? Here is Robert Bowman. Give him a hug, old fellow, for the gallant manner in which he has worked."

"As for that matter," said the old lawyer, who had come with the rest, "I think you'll have to include us all, my young hero. At all events, I want my share of praise, and I am determined to have it!"

The party, including George Conway, who had only arrived from Wales two hours before, and the attorney, and Robert Bowman, and Philip Munn had left their horses at a farm-house a short distance away, and had come on in this manner so as not to arouse those in the Castle whom they did not care to arouse, Colonel Fitz Eustace, of course, being the chief object of their careful avoidance.

Mark took a look over the court, and having assured himself that the advance might be safely made, he returned and led the party in, and, as they went, George Conway briefly related how he had been set free.

"There was no difficulty," he said, "after Mr. Munn had decided that he had hit upon the right establishment, and that he knew from the letter which you had seen and from the con-

versation which you repeated as having taken place between Fitz Eustace and Tom Monkton."

"Ay," added Munn, as George came to a pause. "We had a letter from Mr. Lawrence to an old judge well known in that part of Wales, who went with us cheerfully, and when the keeper of the den was informed that we only wanted our man and were not disposed to make trouble, he let him go. If we had not found him he might have lain there for years for all his power to escape!"

"Ay, Mark, you have helped to a blessed work!"

And the old steward caught the youth's hand and pressed his lips upon it fervently.

A little later and word had been conveyed to the marquis that the old attorney had arrived, and he said:

"Let him come to me at once!"

And Lawrence went in, and when he had seen how bright his lordship looked, and how cheerful, he told him of the arrival of George Conway.

A great light shone upon Roderic Graham's face, for he felt in his heart that the youth came to him with blessing, and with healing in his presence.

"Bring him! Oh, bring him! I know my father loved him and trusted him, and so will I!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MARQUIS'S LEVER.—CONCLUSION.

HALF an hour later the old lawyer came out from the chamber of the marquis with bright drops in his eyes, and his cheeks wet, and he came alone, leaving George behind. At a short distance from the door he stopped and wiped away the tears, and, after a little reflection, he sought the old steward, whom he found asleep in his great easy-chair.

Mark started up and looked around.

"George is not with me. I have left him with the marquis, and you can imagine how much they have to talk about. However, you may conduct me to the chamber which I am to occupy, and then you will go to your master. By that time I think George will be ready to retire."

Mark lighted a lamp and led Mr. Lawrence to one of the chambers of the main keep, not far from the apartments of the lord of the manor, which had been last occupied by the late marquis, and when he had seen that the aged guest was amply provided for he bade him good night and proceeded to the chamber of his master, where he rapped lightly upon the door.

"Come in!" was the response from within.

He entered, and found the marquis and young Conway seated side by side, the head of the former resting upon the latter's shoulder, with an arm twined affectionately around the failing form.

George rose as the old man entered, and the marquis sat up looking better and stronger than he had looked for a long time. He seemed very happy, and his eyes sparkled with a light which bore strong testimony to the depth and truth of the feeling.

"Go, George; go, and get some rest. I know I shall live to accomplish all we desire. You have no idea of the new strength you have given me. Be under no apprehension. Go to your rest, and borrow no thought of sorrow on my account. It is all right."

Then to the steward:

"Mark, look to it that Fitz Eustace gains no knowledge of this boy's presence. Keep it from all whom you cannot implicitly trust. He will occupy my father's apartments for now. You understand?"

Yes, the old servant understood perfectly.

Then George went and bent down and kissed the marquis; there were murmured blessings and good nights, and then our hero followed Mark from the apartment—followed him to that large, royally appointed chamber where he had

met the late lord and master of the place, and where he was to rest.

He was put here because here he would be out of the way of possible discovery by those whom they wished to keep in ignorance of his presence.

Early on the following morning several messages were sent away from Mendon Castle. One to Sir Peter Waldron from the Lord of Mendon, asking that he would accompany his daughters on their visit to the Castle; another to Dr. Tobias Tobey, requesting his immediate attendance at the Castle; another to Sir Walter Bishop, of Bishop's Castle, the presiding justice of that district of Shropshire; and Sir Walter was requested to bring with him Mr. John Almy, the high sheriff, also residing at Bishop's Castle.

And in the midst of all this business Colonel Fitz Eustace was not disturbed. His red-headed valet had discovered that the old lawyer was in the Castle and had immediately reported, but he borrowed no trouble from that. He could have wished that the old fellow had been kept away, but as that could hardly be expected under the circumstances he must make the best of it.

And the most the lawyer could do would be to make the marquis's will, but as Mendon itself could be willed to nobody he cared not. If he won the title all well.

Towards the middle of the forenoon, having eaten his breakfast and performed an extra toilet, the colonel called for his horse, and with his valet in company started off for Waldron Hall.

He had heard nothing of the invitation which had been sent to the ladies, and, as may be imagined, he was somewhat surprised when the fact was made known to him; and he was still further and more deeply surprised when he learned that on that very morning the baronet had received a like invitation.

What could it mean?

"It means," said Sir Peter, with pompous assurance, "that the marquis wishes to acknowledge his friendship and his esteem before he passes away."

"I suppose you will accept the invitation?"

"Of course I shall. Will you wait and go with us?"

The colonel hesitated. He had come for the purpose of seeing and speaking with Bella, but he did not think the time would be opportune. He could see very plainly that the strange and unexpected message of the marquis had had a wondrous effect upon the baronet.

It took precedence in his mind of all else. Even he, the sutor for his daughter's hand and prospective heir of Mendon, must occupy for the time a second place. He did not like it.

But should he wait and return to the Castle with Sir Peter and his daughters? He knew not what to answer. The more he reflected upon the affair the more troubled he became.

But what harm could befall himself? Surely none. What the marquis could have in mind he could not conceive, but he could think of no possible manner in which the event could be turned to bode evil to him.

He had almost made up his mind to announce that he would bear them company when the thought struck him that he might feel out of place in Bella's company unless an invitation could come from herself. It would not be pleasant to have a scene with her under such circumstances.

Really he shrank from encountering the proud-spirited girl in her sister's company. He preferred to tell himself that Kate was piqued because he had selected her sister for his love instead of herself, and he tried to think that she would torment him on that account.

Thus was he balancing and vacillating when an accident decided him. He overheard Bella whisper to her sister, asking if she supposed "the colonel" would "have the impudence" to wait and go with them; and he heard Kate make answer:

"Don't fear, Bella. He hasn't got the courage!"

The result of which was that Colonel Fitz Eustace bowed very politely to the baronet,

with his hand upon his bosom, and a side glance at the watchful girls, and said:

"My dear Sir Peter, you are very kind. I cannot refuse the pleasure you offer. I will ride with you and send my horse on by my servant. It is time I found myself at home with a portion of your family; and may I not properly add, equally time that the portion to which I allude began to feel a little acclimated in my presence?"

"Thank fortune I shall never attempt the cultivation of such a feeling," spoke Bella, with flushed cheeks and flashing eyes; for the man had given her a significant glance by way of directing his meaning, and it touched her deeply.

Fitz Eustace's eyes flashed back a revengeful fire upon her, and his right hand was clenched as though he would strike. He instantly glided to her side and whispered into her ear:

"By Heaven, girl! you shall suffer for this, if I live. Mark my words!"

And then like one suffocating he turned away, pulling nervously at his cravat, his face paling after its sudden flush, and a very demon manifest in the whole tone and bearing.

At the Castle Dr. Tobey had arrived and had found his patient wonderfully strong and vigorous, considering all the circumstances—considering that digestion had almost entirely stopped, life being supported by such aliment as could be absorbed into the circulation as it was swallowed; for such was literally the fact.

Yes, the marquis was wonderfully strong, and he seemed to be entirely happy and contented. George Conway spent much of the forenoon with him, while the old attorney and Mark Dowler came and went as occasion required.

Towards noon the Widow Conway arrived, and with her came Rachel Bowman, mother of Robert and foster-mother of Bella.

And there was another arrival just upon the stroke of high-twelve—the old Justice of the Marches, Sir Walter Bishop, and his high sheriff, Mr. John Almy. Sir Walter was a portly, comfortable-looking man, sixty years of age, and seeming at the height of his capacity of enjoyment of the good things of life. He spent half an hour with the marquis, and was then taken in charge by Mr. Lawrence, who led him up to the apartments of the late lord of the Castle, where our hero kept him company.

An hour after noon, exactly, the brightly glided caparisons of the showy team of Sir Peter Waldron were at the landing of the vestibule, and shortly thereafter the baronet was welcomed by his brother of Bishop's Castle, assisted by Mr. Lawrence, while the two girls were taken in charge by the two widows Conway and Bowman, both of whom had been impressed into service.

"Colonel!" said the old attorney, after he had seen Sir Peter depart in company with Sir Walter, and the two girls borne away by the elder women, "you, I imagine, will look out for yourself. Assuredly it is not for me to guide you."

These words, with the deferential bow that accompanied them, coming from the trusted and confidential attorney of the Grahams for two generations, lifted the heart of the plotter wonderfully; and he smiled upon the old man benignantly.

"My dear Mr. Lawrence," he said, with a palpable effort to appear familiar and friendly, and at the same time to maintain a proper dignity, "I will not trouble you now. But, sir, you will allow me to hope that in the time to come, should occasion require, you will be my right-hand man."

And with a grand bow he passed on.

Up in a section of the Castle that had been, in other times, devoted to the use of the mistress and her ladies, were Kate and Bella Waldron, with the two widows. The girls had removed their outer garments, and given a sufficient look into the mirror, when Robert Bowman came in, very quietly, and spoke to his mother, whereupon she nodded pleasantly and then went over and took Bella by the arm and led her towards one of the doors communicating with an ante-room.

"Come with me, Bella."

"Oh! Mamma Bowman, what is it?" cried our heroine, in a convulsive, startled whisper.

"Come and see, sweet child."

"Oh! how strange and mysterious everything is! What are we all here for? If you do not tell me I will not own you for my foster-mother—I declare it!"

"Wait a moment, Bella—you shall see directly."

Across two small dressing-rooms, then across a narrow hall, then a richly-curtained entry-way, and then Bella found herself in the magnificently appointed and furnished apartment which had been the last marchioness's boudoir.

"There," said Aunt Rachael, as they entered this sumptuous bower, "now you must find your own answer. And, my blessed child, let me hope that you will—"

But the good old foster-mother did not finish the sentence. Before she could do so, Bella had broken from her hold and bounded from her side and found rest upon the bosom of her own true love—*her mother!*

"Oh! George! George!"

And then she raised her head and held him away so as to look full into his face. Yes! It was her here!

"Oh! my own—my love!"

"Darling! I am safe and well. Oh! this is joy! I think I could suffer it all over again just for this moment of supreme joy! Bella! my own! my love! I love you! I love you, dear heart! I love you!"

And Mrs. Bowman left them there—the one to tell the story of his strange abduction, his imprisonment in a madhouse, and his final release by his friends; while the other told of all she had suffered and all she had feared.

She told of the towering ambition of Fitz Eustace and how he had calked and threatened; and when the maiden asked her dear lover what was to come he took her once more to his bosom, bidding her wait and see.

The great clock of the Castle connected with the old bell of the main tower was upon the stroke of three when Roderio, Marquis of Mendon, called upon his old attorney to gather together the company he had invited; then Mr. Lawrence called Robert Bowman to his assistance and went at the work.

The Lord of Mendon was seated in a great easy-chair in the great drawing-room of the new keep. It was a regal apartment, sumptuously furnished and charmingly adorned.

First to be ushered into his presence were the two baronets, Sir Peter Waldron and Sir Walter Bishop. Roderio felt his heart swell as they gave him their hands, and his greeting was heartily cordial. He did not arise from his seat, but the presence of his faithful physician, Dr. Tobey, standing close behind him, offered a sufficient explanation and excuse.

Next came the high sheriff, Mr. Almy, who was well known to his lordship, and who was received with friendly warmth.

Then came Mrs. Conway and Mrs. Bowman, with Kate and Bella Waldron. As the two girls came up Roderio made an effort and arose.

"To you, dear cousins—ay, sweet sisters—I must arise. Bless you both!"

He kissed the hand of Kate and she passed on, but when Bella came up he drew her towards him and pressed his lips upon her forehead, saying, as he did so:

"Ah! I have the right! I have the right! as you shall see anon."

Before she could give him even a look in reply he had gently handed her aside and resumed his seat.

Old Mark, the steward, and Charles Allen, the faithful old valet of the late lord, were present, together with several of the older and more trusty of the other servants of Mendon.

Thus stood matters when Colonel Fitz Eustace was announced. That gentleman had been informed that the marquis had taken a fancy to meet his best friends once more before he should

be called away from them, and that he wished to enjoy the satisfaction of seeing them together, and furthermore it had been hinted to him that he, the marquis, had a strange story of his own experience which he wished to tell them.

The colonel seemed a little startled and for a moment nervous on entering the drawing-room, but he quickly recovered his balance—he was a man of wonderful powers of self-control when not enraged—and having swept the room with his keenly flashing eyes he advanced to the marquis and extended his hand.

"My dear cousin, this is joy! You look better than I had dared to hope. Thank Heaven for the blessing!"

"I thank you for your good words, colonel, and I am certainly glad to see you here. Really I brought this company here to meet you. I wanted them to see you and to know you."

"Oh! Roderio, you are kind. You are thoughtful."

"And I have reason to be," nodded the marquis. Then he laughed a little quiet laugh and added: "You know, as do all the rest, that I am but a sorry dog, very soon to be called away from this busy scene, and before taking that wondrous step in the dark I want to let my friends see and know the man who is to succeed me in the lordship of this ancient domain."

"Oh! hush. Do not talk of leaving us, my cousin."

But the marquis did not invite further remark. He waved the colonel away, and the latter passed on and took a seat by the side of Sir Peter. He had looked toward the spot where Bella sat, but the seats there were all occupied, so he contented himself elsewhere.

When all were seated the marquis made a sign to the physicians, who gave him a draught of cordial. He drank it, and then looked over his audience, and at length, with a pleasant smile upon his face, he said:

"My friends, did you ever think what a wonderful thing or what a wonderful element is human passion? A passion that unseats reason and warps judgment. I knew a man once who had a wife he almost worshipped. He did certainly idolise her. That wife had given him one son, and in the course of years she gave him another; but, alas! the birth of this second son cost the mother's life. She never arose from that sick bed. The child, however, was strong and healthy, and it grew and thrived. But the bereaved husband, in his supreme agony of loneliness, took a terrible dislike to the child whose birth had cost him so dearly, and no force of reason or of sense nor the growing beauty and goodness of the little boy could lead him to love it."

"Time passed on. When that younger boy was ten years old the opportunity presented itself of sending him to India, and the father sent him, caring, then, never to see the bright-faced boy again. And in India the boy remained and grew up to manhood."

"But a curious thing happened, of which I will tell you: When that boy was fifteen or sixteen—sixteen it was—at that age he was impelled by a strong desire to see his old home. With him, in the same family, and native of the same town, was this boy's foster-brother, who had gone to India with him—both boys having been taken by the same wealthy gentleman—this last-mentioned had as a servant, while the first had been taken to rear in higher life. Well, our first boy was named Tom, and the second, the poorer born, was named Dick. Tom believed that he could return to his old home in the character of Dick. So the gentleman who was their master wrote to the people of that town that Master Dick was coming home on a visit."

"Well, Tom came home in that guise. He went at once to the cottage of his foster-mother, and confessed his secret, and she promised to keep it sacredly. And she did! She received him as her own son, and none knew the cheat. The boy visited his old home, saw his father and his brother, and saw the old servants, and not one of them recognised in the tall, stout, powerful, brown-visaged boy the little, delicate Tom of the other years."

"He spent a few weeks in this way and then returned to India."

"And time passed on again. At length, when Tom had reached his full manhood, being over one-and-twenty, and grown to a man of influence and mark among the people with whom he lived, he learned that his father was sick and not expected to recover, and that his elder brother was not well. Learning this, he determined to come home again. This time he would have come in his own guise, for all influence of any fear of opposition; but the fancy possessed him that he would like to masquerade once more. And there was another and a deeper reason. If his father were to be taken away, and his brother were to follow, he would be master of the old estate, and he wanted, in such case, to enjoy the privilege of looking upon things while he was himself unknown. It would be a grand advantage. He could thus see, with his own eyes, a hundred things which would be hidden from the acknowledged master."

"Well, to make a short story of it, he came home again, having sent word in advance that Dick was coming. Yes, he came, and, as before, he went to his dear foster-mother and told her the truth, and she received him as her own son, and so she presented him to others. And Tom—calling himself Dick all the time—saw his father, and, oh! blessed hour, he found his father yearning for his youngest boy. And he made this young man promise that he would write a letter to the absent one, and bring him home."

"But, let me tell you here, the boy was not wholly deceiving. I have told you that the boys were foster-brothers. Tom's own mother being dead in his infancy, he was given into the care of Dick's mother, he, Dick, having been born on the very same day with him; and when the child of the dead woman had been named, and called, we will say, John Henry Thomas Alonzo Richard—the mother of the other named her boy Thomas Richard. So, you see, they were both Toms and both Dicks."

"And, let me tell you, the boy, seeing his father failing and surely dying, went in unto him and rested upon his bosom, and told him the whole truth, and the old man died sweetly happy and content because he had seen and blessed his younger boy!"

"Now, my friends, I have come to a very strange part of my story. When our young Tom reached home he found, arrived just before him, a man whom he thought he knew, a man who seemed to be masquerading, as he was, travelling under an assumed name. And it seemed to our hero—mind, you, Tom is our hero—it seemed to him that this man had some subtle intent, some secret project, for deceiving others that he might profit thereby. At first he was not sure, but he meant to be sure, however; and, to that end, he set himself to the work of watching."

"But he had an experienced trickster to deal with. Suddenly, while our hero was planning a visit to London, he was snatched away from us. We awoke one bright, crisp morning, or the people of Tom's village awoke, to find Tom missing."

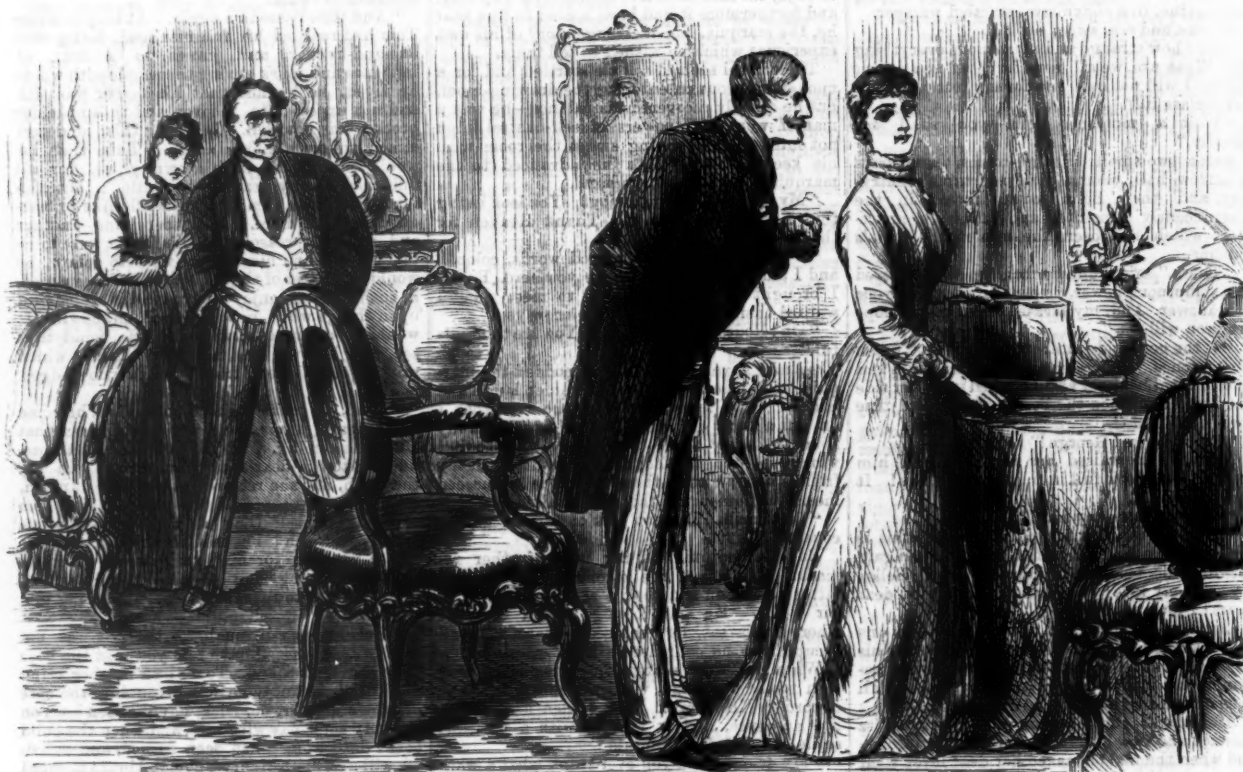
"And, here, my friends, I think I will let Tom himself finish the story, for I am weary. Robert, will you call our Tom? Ah! colonel, what's the matter? You are not going to leave us?"

"Only for a moment," said Fitz Eustace, in a hoarse, unnatural whisper. He had arisen and turned towards the door.

"No, no; sit down again, colonel. Don't go yet. Ah! here comes my hero. Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce Arthur George Albert Conway Graham!"

The soi-disant colonel looked and saw the youth called George Conway entering through the Moorish archway, the youth whom he had helped to drag away from his bed and from his home, and who he had fondly believed to be at that moment in a Welsh madhouse.

"My brother. Do you not know him, good people? Mercy! how did he so hoodwink us?"



["BY HEAVEN, GIRL! YOU SHALL SUFFER FOR THIS."]

Ay, they knew him now. And here was the true heir of Mendon, safe and sound, and worthy the honours awaiting him.

Arthur, for so we will now call him, advanced and gave his hand to his elder brother, and then bent over and imprinted a kiss upon his brow. Then he looked up and turned to the wonder-stricken assembly.

"My dear friends," he said, "my brother has told to you my simple story so far as he felt able. At some time I hope to tell you of my recent experience in Wales. At present, however, I have to pay my compliments to the man who procured for me that delightful journey, and who became personally responsible for my board and lodging while in that far-off region. Here he is. You have known him as Colonel James Fitz Eustace. Allow me to present him to you in his true character. Ah! Mr. Almy!"

The man had risen to his feet again and was upon the point of leaping towards a door, but the sheriff motioned to two officers who had stood aside out of sight, and they came forward and laid their hands upon him, while our hero went on:

"His true name, dear friends, is—KIERKE BEDLOW! upon whose head a price is set from Scotland Yard that will amply repay the man who shall deliver him up!"

As these words left Arthur's lips the two officers adroitly carried the prisoner's hands behind him, and in that position snapped a pair of manacles upon his wrists.

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed Sir Peter, when he could sufficiently command his speech. "Is it possible? Oh, did he—did he—rob me?"

"He did," answered Arthur.

Bedlow here hissed forth a profane denial, whereupon responded our hero:

"It's of no use, colonel! You have been watched when you knew it not. There are secret passages in the old parts of the Castle through which Mark Dowler and I overlooked much of your doings. I saw you with Sir Peter's money spread before you! Also by letters which Mark was enabled to read, through the same

secret means we discovered where your two accomplices, Tom Monkton and Dick Ladybird, were, and I have only to inform you further that they will be at the prison to welcome you. Sir Peter, your money is safe, every pound of it."

Arthur paused here, but catching a peculiar look upon Bedlow's face, an inquisitive look, and anticipating the question he would ask, he added:

"Would you like to know, colonel, how I first came to know you, having never seen you before? Because I knew the true Colonel James Fitz Eustace, son of our old Aunt Elizabeth, and I knew that he lived in Allahabad five years ago. I had heard, too, that a certain notorious gambler and thief, named Bedlow, had been much in his company and had used his friendship for the purpose of gaining introduction to the English army officers in India. So you can see it came very natural for me to fancy that you, knowing Fitz Eustace's life-story so thoroughly, must be that same Kirke Bedlow. You surely cannot blame me for what I have done. The game was of your own making and you have been beaten."

The prisoner hissed an ejaculation of fury, and then he bowed his head, like one shaken and exhausted, and was led from the room—was led to a place of safety for the hour, to be taken in due time to the King's Court, and thence to a far-away land, whither his comrades in crime were to bear him company—a land of the out-cast and the condemned!

For a little time after the false colonel had been led away a silent spell rested upon the assembly in the great drawing-room. Poor Sir Peter! He looked like one just awakened from a horrible dream. He gazed after the departing freebooter, and then looked around upon those who remained behind. The marquis saw his trouble and spoke.

"Sir Peter, look you; I have a proposition to make. I regard this boy, this brother of mine, rather in the light of a son than otherwise, and I very much wish to see him settled down in

life. We all know that I am not long to be here to care for him, so I must find a keeper. Will you assist me? Will you give to me, or, give to him—to Arthur—your daughter Bella?"

The old man started as though a bright light had suddenly flashed before his eyes.

"Will I? Will—Ah! but will he take her? Does he want her?"

"I can answer that, Sir Peter," cried our hero. "I do want her, with all my heart, and if she will take me now that she knows who and what I am she shall have me."

"Then by the Crown and Sceptre you shall have her! Bella! if you refuse me this request—Why, bless my soul! What in the world does this mean? Hi! you young rascals! what sort of a game have you been up to?"

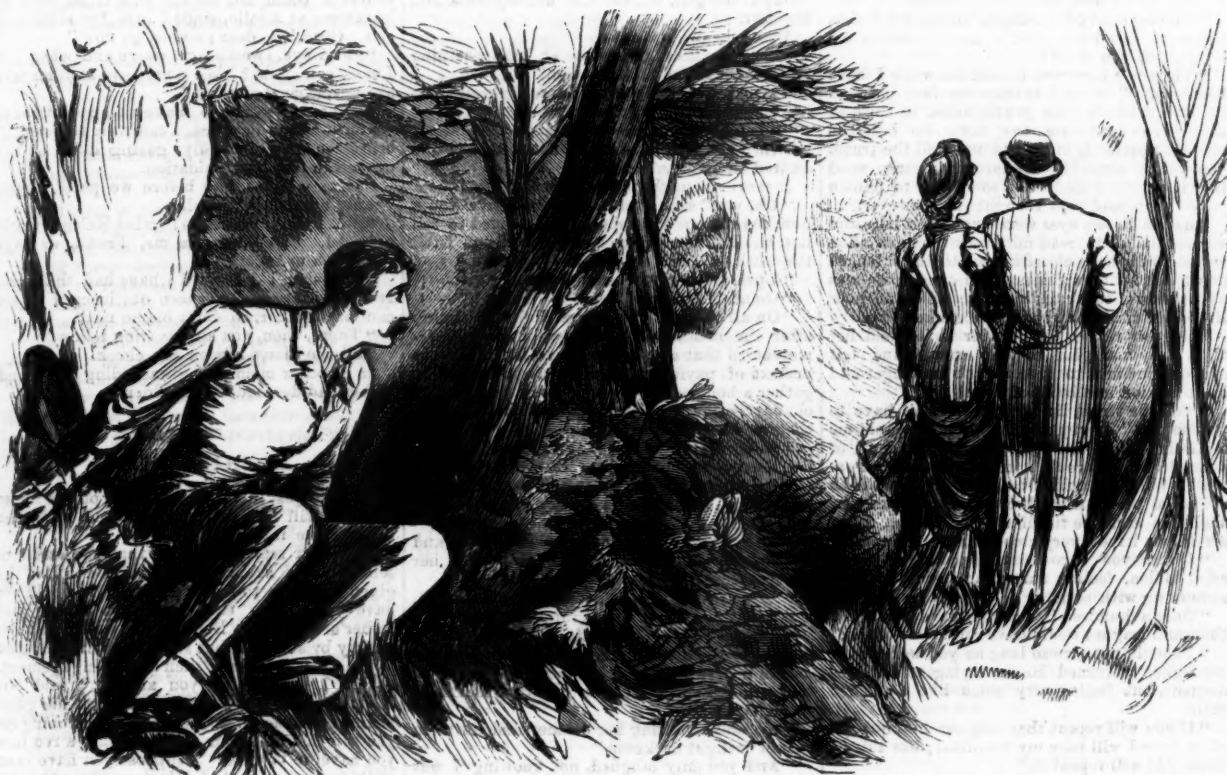
"Dear papa, he is my Hero! He saved my life. Don't you remember?"

"Oh, yes, I remember. And so he's been—but never mind. You saved her, Arthur, and now she is yours. May you both be as happy as I am at this moment."

And he placed their hands together and pronounced a hearty blessing upon them.

And the blessing was to follow them. And Roderic, under the pleasurable influence of his dear brother's presence, and in witnessing that brother's well-deserved happiness, was to take a new lease of life, was to live long enough to see Bella installed as mistress of Mendon Castle, with her dear hero for its Lord and Master—its lord, indeed, as he was soon to become in name—and to see the true George Conway, who had set sail a full month before the sailing of the Roland Castle, arrive home, safe and sound, in season to grace the wedding of his idolised foster-brother—to see this—and in the end to calmly and trustfully close his eyes upon the scenes of earth, exchanging the mortal for the immortal, leaving his young brother to wear the coronet, and with it the love and esteem, deep and abiding, of the multitude who were to look up to him for support and guidance.

[THE END.]



[LIFTING HIMSELF ON HIS ELBOW HE LOOKED AFTER THE YOUNG COUPLE.]

HOW HE LOST HER.

A NOVELETTE.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

CHAPTER I.

A HIGH brick wall, dividing a narrow lane from the grounds belonging to a gentleman's mansion, a young and pretty girl with golden hair and dark blue eyes leaning on top of the wall and looking expectantly down the road.

This young lady was the only daughter of Horace Medhurst, and was standing on a step ladder waiting for a stolen meeting with her lover.

"Will he never come?" she asked herself, and a flush of anger and annoyance suffused her face, and her red lips quivered. "He is already a quarter of an hour behind time, and papa will be wondering what I am about. If he does not come in five minutes I shall not stay a moment longer. It is the woman's place to keep her lover waiting. How unkind of Frank to treat me like this!"

The five minutes went slowly by, and although there was still no sign of Helen's lover the young girl did not feel at all inclined to put her threat of going away into execution, but still stood on the ladder, the tears welling up into her beautiful eyes as she cried, aloud:

"It is really too bad—it is indeed! I will never forgive him for this—no, never!"

But would he care for her resentment? It almost seemed that he had commenced to tire of her already. Could it be that those stolen meetings were growing monotonous? If he had been merely amusing himself at her expense his conduct had indeed been shameful, for he knew how she loved and trusted him. Perhaps she had let him read her secret a little too plainly and he did not care for a heart that was so easily won.

It had been a case of love at first sight with Helen, who knew that she had found her ideal the instant her eyes lighted upon Frank Osborn's handsome face and strong, athletic figure; and Frank was a man whom any woman, fancy free, might have been willing to die for, with his clear-cut features, large dark eyes, and silky, black moustache.

To be nearly run over and half frightened out of one's wits by a high-stepping horse is scarcely agreeable, and yet it was to such an experience that Helen owed her acquaintance with Frank, and the girl could not help regarding it as a very lucky accident.

He was driving a dog-cart, and came upon her so quickly on the dusky country road that she had scarcely time to move out of the way, and of course it was only natural that he should jump down to apologise for his carelessness.

She never quite knew whether it was by accident or design on his part that they met again, but it was not long before they were well acquainted enough to make appointments, and Helen would talk to him in the gloaming over the garden wall.

He had never disappointed her before, and her girlish bosom was full of bitterness as she prepared to descend the ladder and return to the house.

What was that? Helen's heart gave a great throb of joy, and she put her hand to her breast as if to stop its wild beatings. She had distinctly heard the sound of horses' hoofs on the hard road. A lovely blush mounted to her brow and she gave utterance to a joyful little cry of relief.

Frank had not forgotten her! She waited breathless and eager, watching for horse and rider to turn the bend of the lane, a look of radiant happiness on her face.

"My own Frank!" she cried, excitedly, standing on tip-toe on the ladder; "how glad I shall be to see him! Why, he has been away a whole month. How I have ever managed to exist without him is more than I can understand; but it has been a very miserable time for me."

Next moment she felt angry with herself for having displayed so much eagerness.

What right had Frank to keep her waiting? It was unmaidenly on her part not to feel more indignant at such neglect. She would punish him for his ungallant behaviour in keeping a lady waiting.

She had been too humble to her lover, but he should now see that she possessed a spirit. She would be as cold as ice, and he should not melt her as easily as the sunshine melts the snow. Miss Medhurst fully intended to stand on her dignity.

But it would be difficult for her to conceal her gladness at seeing him again, and more difficult still to banish the love-light from her eyes. She felt afraid that he would see through the imposture at a glance.

Helen half averted her face and gazed steadily in the opposite direction, as if in ignorance of her lover's approach. She made an exquisite picture as she stood leaning on the old wall, and so Frank thought as he drew rein.

"Oh! it's you, is it?" she said, still not looking round.

"What, sulky, little one?" asked her lover, admiring the delicate prettiness of the girl's profile. "This is not the kind of greeting I expected after so long an absence. Don't pout your red lips and look angry, but look round and tell me what I have done."

"I am not sulky," replied Helen, indignantly.

"Then what is the matter with my Helen?" asked Frank. "You cannot think how eagerly I have looked forward to this meeting, and you give me a frown instead of a smile!"

"You have only been away a month," said Helen, coldly.

"An eternity to me," returned Frank, stretching out his hand. "Won't you shake hands with me, Helen?"

"If you wish it," said the girl, turning her face towards him and meeting the honest gaze of her lover, who took the little fingers in his and pressed them gently.

"Won't you tell me how I have offended you?" he said, in his pleasant, winsome tones.

"You have not offended me," responded Helen. "How do you know that I have troubled my head about you at all?"

"Then you have not missed me while I have been away?" he said, taking her face between his brown hands with gentle force, in spite of the girl's resistance, the horse he bestrode standing perfectly still. "Come, tell the truth, you young vixen! if you dare to utter a word that is untrue I shall find some way to punish you. I can read your thoughts in your eyes."

And his brown eyes were fixed upon hers and seemed indeed to read her every thought. She would gladly have closed her white lids or looked down, but his eyes fascinated her and she was as powerless to avoid his gaze as some poor little bird transfixed by a rattlesnake.

She grew redder and redder as he held her thus, only too glad of the excuse, and felt strongly inclined to give vent to her anger and mortification in a burst of tears.

"Tell the truth, little one, or I shall have to punish you," he repeated. "You have told me a falsehood, and are very properly ashamed of yourself, or you would not blush to such an extent. Why, my golden-haired fairy, you are as red as a pomegranate from brow to neck, and your shell-like ears are tingling with shame. I am afraid you have a very crooked little tongue."

"I wish you were a hundred miles away!" cried Helen, feeling sure that her eyes were swimming with tears.

"Only a hundred! I should have thought a thousand leagues would have suited you better."

"I should not care so long as you were out of my sight," returned Helen, trying to look indignant, but feeling very much like a scolded child.

"If you will repeat that request in a quarter of an hour I will take my dismissal; but I don't think you will repeat it."

"Why not?" demanded Helen, trying to steady her voice, which would tremble dangerously in spite of herself.

"Because you love me," said Helen.

"Love you?"

"Yes. I can read your love in your eyes, in your deep, burning blushes. Come, it is no use denying it, Helen. You think me one of the noblest fellows in the world, which I am not; you love me, Helen, and I know it; you are only seventeen, child, and cannot hide your feelings; if you were a little older perhaps you could, but I am not so sure of that, my little impulsive darling."

"I hate you!" cried Helen, indignantly, and this time she made an attempt to escape from those strong, loving arms, but they still held her fast.

"You shall have your punishment now," cried Frank, and drawing down her face he kissed her ripe red lips and burning cheeks again and again.

It was the first time he had kissed Helen, and the impulse had come upon him suddenly.

The horse stood like a statue, and the lovers were almost as motionless for the next few moments. Frank had let Helen go, but her arms were still resting on the wall—she had not left him.

"You are not angry now, love?" said the young man, passionately. "I am sure I have done nothing to offend."

"You have kept me waiting, sir," returned Helen, covering her face with her hands to conceal the radiant happiness which his loving, passionate kisses had given her, and to hide the love-light in her eyes.

His first kisses! It seemed to Helen that these brief moments when he had kissed her flushed cheeks and quivering red lips were the brightest in her life—moments of more than earthly joy stolen from heaven.

"Have I kept you waiting, my blue-eyed beauty?" cried Frank, while the horse for the first time pawed the ground impatiently. "I am very sorry."

"Yes," returned Helen, reproachfully. "I have been here for half an hour."

"Did you indeed wait for me all that time?"

"I would have waited longer for your sake," thought the girl, but she did not say what she thought.

What she did say was:

"You promised to be here at half-past nine this morning, and it is now ten."

"Won't you believe that I really could not help myself?" said her lover.

"I suppose you have some excuse to offer," returned the girl, laughing, not at all as if she desired an explanation.

It was evident that her anger had flown.

"Oh, yes," said Frank; "I could give you a hundred reasons for being late if I liked to tell lies, but I have only one excuse to offer if I tell the truth. Which shall it be?"

"I prefer the truth," said the young girl.

"On all occasions?"

"On all occasions," returned Helen, colouring after she had made this assertion, for she remembered that she had left her father on the pretext of paying a visit to the buthouse to gather a bouquet of flowers, a task upon which old Jarvis, the gardener, was busily engaged at that moment.

"Well, then," said Frank, "I was passing the Rectory when the rector called me in to introduce me to his youngest son, who has just left Oxford, and I could not very well refuse him invitation."

"And you saw Rosaline?" cried Helen, and there was a jealous ring in her voice which her lover detected at once.

"You are not jealous, little one," he said, looking at her with amused interest.

"Jealous of her?" scornfully. "I have no reason to be jealous of her—the red-faced girl. I shall not easily forget how she kissed you in mistake for her brother the night we called at the Rectory."

"She was expecting her brother, and the room was in twilight darkness."

"And you only laughed, not knowing I was behind the curtain."

"What else could I do, Helen? You would not have me behave like a bear to a pretty woman."

"You think her pretty?" asked Helen, with a pout.

"Very pretty."

"Then why don't you ask her to marry you, since she is so altogether charming in your eyes?" demanded Helen, biting her red lips with her cruel little white teeth.

"Because," said Frank, putting one arm round the girl's slender waist, "because I think you much better and prettier in every way; because, in short, I want you to marry me yourself. See what I have bought you, Helen."

And he slipped an engagement ring on her finger.

"Oh, Frank!" cried the girl, in utter surprise and bewilderment.

"Yes, Helen," said Frank, earnestly. "I want you to be my wife—my own dear little wife."

"Your wife," faltered the girl, looking at the glittering ring admiringly. "This is so sudden and unexpected!"

"But you will consent?" said Frank, eagerly interrupting her. "You will, won't you?"

Helen's only answer was a bright blush, and another kiss was exchanged. For a few moments the lovers were wildly happy, but presently the girl gave another glance at the ring on her finger.

"How can I wear this?" she cried, in an agitated voice; "papa would see it."

"You will wear it, pet, when I come to ask your father for your hand?" said Frank, confidently. "He won't refuse me when he knows how I love you."

"But he will refuse you, Frank," returned Helen. "And, oh! I have nearly forgotten that I have something awful to tell you. Don't be angry, there is a dear boy. I have consented to marry you, and my husband is coming here to-day at papa's invitation."

"Your husband, Helen?" cried the young man, with a dark frown. "What in the world do you mean?"

"The husband papa intends me to marry,"

returned Helen, with a silvery laugh; "but of course I could not be his wife if he were as handsome as Apollo, since I care for somebody else. Good bye, dear; I must go now."

"Good bye, sweetheart; where and when can I meet you again? We must have another talk about this rival of mine."

"There is no time to make an appointment; we must trust to chance. I can hear footsteps!" cried the girl, hurriedly, gazing down at the ground in evident trepidation.

"Give me one kiss before we part," urged Frank, holding her hand.

"No, I can't, I must go!" cried Helen, greatly agitated. "Don't detain me, Frank, or papa will catch us together."

"You shan't stir until I have had that kiss. It will be through your own obstinacy if we are caught together, so don't blame me."

"There, then, you aggravating fellow."

And she kissed him on the cheek.

In another moment he was sliding away, and Helen had descended the ladder.

CHAPTER II.

She had just taken Frank's ring off her finger and was still agitated and confused when her father came into view.

She could scarcely realize that she had consented to be Frank's wife. Had he given her time to think perhaps she would not have yielded so easily without asking her father's consent. But he had taken her so utterly by surprise that she had no time to think of the consequences of such a rash engagement.

"So I have found you at last," said Mr. Medhurst, looking at Helen through his gold-rimmed spectacles. "I have been searching for you this last half-hour. Why, what a red face you have, to be sure! I suppose you have been walking in the sun and doing your best to spoil your complexion. Halloa! how came this ladder against the wall?"

Rather suspiciously this, for he noticed the girl's nervously twisting fingers and drooping eyes.

He was a stout man, but he mounted the ladder with surprising agility for a man of his years and weight, and popped his head over the wall in time to see Frank slowly turn the corner.

"Humph!" said Mr. Medhurst. But he made no comment upon what he had seen when he rejoined his daughter, although he privately resolved that the ladder should be removed at the earliest opportunity.

"Why, how active you are, papa!" cried Helen, her blue eyes looking so intensely innocent that she nearly succeeded in banishing all suspicions from her father's mind. "You went up the ladder like a young man."

"Yes; I am active enough when free of my old enemy, the gout," responded Mr. Medhurst. "But come indoors. I am expecting Jack Rogers and want you to look your best. He is immensely rich, and will make you a good husband, Helen."

"But I don't want to be married, papa," said Helen as she took her father's arm and they walked through the grounds. "I have never thought of such a thing."

"I must see you settled before I die, child. I can't leave you alone in the world."

"You have many years to live, papa, dear." "I hope so, Helen; but it is best to be on the safe side. People of my age sometimes pop off suddenly."

"How I wish Jack Rogers would catch some contagious fever and fall sick and die," thought Helen, vindictively.

She said, aloud:

"What makes you think he wants to marry me?"

"Because he has taken a great fancy to your pretty face."

"Then he has seen me!" cried Helen, surprised.

"Yes; he saw you at the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race, and he told me he thought you

the prettiest girl in existence, praised your eyes, hair, features, and complexion—raved about you, in fact. You wore a dark-blue dress on the occasion."

"I don't remember seeing him," said Helen, woman-like pleased that she was thought pretty.

"You were not introduced," replied her father. "He was with two or three friends—nice fellows, in their way, but not the kind of people I should like you to be acquainted with."

"Then he associates with people below him in station?"

"Well, he is rather fond of sport, and was with his jockey, who had won him a pile of money, and Ball, the trainer."

"And these are the sort of people he would wish me to entertain if I were his wife," cried Helen, indignantly. "How could you give your daughter to such a man, papa?"

"The best fellow in the world," cried Mr. Medhurst, "and fabulously rich. You are talking arrant nonsense, Helen."

"Riches cover a multitude of sins," said Helen, quietly. "I am to take this gilded pill, however repugnant the after-taste may be to my feelings."

"Don't argue with me, girl," cried her father, whose irascibility was aroused. "You'll have to do what you are told, so it is useless to continue the discussion. You are just as flighty as your mother was at your age. It must be a very short engagement, as I want to see you settle down."

"I am only seventeen! Have I been such a very bad daughter that you seem so anxious to get rid of me?"

"Bad! no," said the father, slightly mollified, "but you are heart whole now and haven't had time to form any foolish attachment. It is always better for girls to marry young."

"Marry without love," cried Helen.

"Love!" shrieked Mr. Medhurst, "don't talk such nonsense. What do you know about such folly?"

Helen made no reply, but smiled a little as she glanced at her father's grim old figure. Her face flushed crimson as she thought of those precious moments she had spent with her lover, but there was a half-mischievous light in the lovely upturned eyes.

"You'll try and make yourself agreeable to young Rogers, now, won't you?" urged her father.

"I don't think you can accuse me of ever behaving rudely to anyone," returned Helen. "Nothing will make me forget that I am a lady, papa."

"But I don't want you to treat Rogers like an ordinary acquaintance," said Mr. Medhurst, testily. "I expect you to make the young man feel at home."

"I will do my best, papa," returned Helen, meekly. "You don't want me to do all the love-making, I suppose."

And she gave him a saucy smile as they slowly sauntered towards the house, a small, compact mansion of red brick and stone, half covered with ivy.

"Don't be ridiculous, Helen," cried her parent, "you know exactly what I mean, and I intend to be obeyed."

"I have never disobeyed you yet," returned the girl, evasively, averting her face and gazing intently at the green sward, which was studded here and there with beds of brilliant, many-coloured flowers.

Her father's voice had grown very stern, and she felt that he was thoroughly in earnest. He had always done his best to shield his daughter from any approach of trouble or care, and it would have astonished him not a little if he had been told that he was trying to make his daughter unhappy for life.

There were very few girls that would not jump at such a chance, he told himself, although of course Helen was pretty enough to be fastidious. However, it would all come right in the end, he had no doubt, and Helen growing older and wiser would learn to laugh at the folly which made her so blind to her own interest.

Mr. Medhurst had not the slightest idea that she was no longer fancy free, in spite of that

suspicious ladder and the handsome young equestrian.

The French windows were open, and Horace Medhurst passed through into the drawing-room, followed by his daughter, who had never looked more beautiful than at that moment in her simple primrose-coloured cambric.

"Hullo! Medhurst, I have been waiting for you this half-hour," said a voice which made them both start. "Where the—"

The speaker, who was no less a person than Mr. Jack Rogers, paused very abruptly and turned very red, for he had been about to make use of a very strong expletive when he luckily caught sight of Helen. He was seated in the darkest corner of the room, which was made very dim and cool by the curtained verandah, with two large mastiffs by his side, one of which he was caressing languidly.

"I am delighted to make you acquainted with my daughter," cried Mr. Medhurst, effusively.

"Helen, this is Mr. John Rogers, or Jack, as he prefers to be called by his friends."

Helen acknowledged the introduction by a queenly little bow and a very frigid smile, which gave a haughty curve to the red-lipped mouth.

"Beg your pardon," stammered the young man, awkwardly stumbling over a chair as he tried to return Helen's bow, and then he added, desperately: "I hope you will consider me your friend, Miss Medhurst."

"All papa's friends are mine," she answered, unbending a little, as she looked at the pleasant, fresh-coloured face of the awkward young giant.

She had expected to see a very different person, and had drawn a fancy portrait of Mr. John Rogers which was not at all flattering.

Jack listened to the silvery voice eagerly, and came to the conclusion that it was as sweet as her face. He was an impulsive man and had contrived to fall in love with Helen without having exchanged a single word with her. She had worn his favourite colour at the Boat Race, dark blue, and her fair face had haunted him ever since.

He was a good judge of a horse, a woman, and a bottle of wine, and he had seen at once that Helen was thorough-bred, as he expressed it. How pleased the old folks at home would be if he succeeded in winning such a wife. They were always begging him not to marry some vulgar woman who would bring discredit on the family name.

Strangely enough, it never occurred to Jack that Helen might have already met her fate. Her father had given him every encouragement, and he fully believed that the young lady would follow his example, although he was not in the slightest degree conceited or vain. Women must marry, it was their destiny, and he could see no reason why Helen should not give him her love in return for all he had to bestow.

He knew that many a Belgravian mother would have received him with open arms, but he had hitherto held himself aloof from all the blandishments of womankind above a certain class. He had always felt awkward and ill at ease in the society of ladies, but he was sorry he had not courted it more when he found himself in the presence of Helen Medhurst.

CHAPTER III.

JOHN ROGERS improved on acquaintance; he was such a frank, out-spoken, boyish, light-hearted fellow that Helen could not help liking him very much, in spite of the resolution she had made to hate him. Three days had passed away and the young man's passion for the lovely girl had increased rapidly.

They had been left alone together on many occasions by the astute father, and although Helen had at first tried to avoid Jack's society, he seemed so hurt and mortified that she gave up the attempt, having no desire to pain him needlessly, particularly as he behaved in the most respectful manner and did not seem at all

the fellow to fall in love. She began to think that her father had been premature in his assertion that Mr. Rogers meant to make her an offer.

"You avoid me on all occasions, Miss Medhurst," Jack had said, in his frank, out-spoken way. "Come, it is too bad to serve a fellow like this. You said that your father's friends were your friends, and yet you treat me like a stranger. I'll tell you what it is, if you don't give me a little more of your society I shall pack up and go away. What can a fellow do all day long by himself? Your father is always being called away on important business."

How could Helen refuse to listen to such an appeal? Besides, he was a very agreeable fellow after all, although he did prevent her seeing Frank. She was never out of his sight, and often felt ready to cry when she reflected that Frank would in all probability think she had forgotten him.

On the third day she became quite desperate, and made an attempt to get out unobserved through a little side gate which led into the lane, but Jack, who was dozing in a hammock under the leafy branches of the trees, heard the click of the latch and insisted upon accompanying her, although she told him she was only going to visit some of her poor, errand from which he was not likely to derive the slightest amusement. There was some truth in the statement, but Helen coloured as she spoke, wondering what her companion would think if he knew her real motive for preferring a lonely walk.

"But I am not going to let you carry that basket," cried Jack, taking possession of it. "I may not be accustomed to the society of ladies, but I should be a Goth, indeed, if I were to let you carry such a weight."

"The basket is not at all heavy," returned Helen.

"Not for me, of course," said Jack, "but your little hands are only fit to hold a few flowers. How the sight of your sunny face must cheer the poor old people. You'd live up a mud hut with your presence, Miss Medhurst."

"If you swing the basket like that you will certainly spill the contents on the ground," said Helen, rather petulantly, as they went out into the lane.

She was in a very bad temper with the innocent Jack, who had not the slightest idea that his company was distasteful.

"You must excuse me for being a very awkward fellow," he answered, deprecatingly, gazing down admiringly at the girl from his superior height. "If you are ever in the least put out don't be afraid to vent your anger on me. I have got broad shoulders, you know, and can bear it."

Helen looked annoyed for a moment, and her anger evaporated in a silvery laugh. How could she be offended with Jack, who was so unconscious that he was de trop? He would have left her at once if she had told him plainly that she preferred to be alone, but Helen could not bring herself to do this and so they walked down the lane together.

For a few moments they walked on in silence, Jack feeling as happy as the birds in the trees and hedges. He would have done anything in the world to win a smile from Helen. How bright the world seemed to-day because she had smiled upon him.

"You live in a pretty neighbourhood," said Jack, at length, trying to steal another glance at Helen's face and nearly getting his eye jagged out with the point of her parasol for his pains, "the sky seems bluer, and the trees and grass fresher and greener than at any other place I have ever visited, and I have never heard birds sing as they sing here, Miss Medhurst."

"And you have travelled?" interrogated Helen, thinking Jack a very strange fellow indeed.

"Yes, a bit, but I prefer my own country to any other. I don't believe in a man that dislikes his native land—seems as unnatural as a fellow disliking his own mother."

"I have never been out of England," observed Helen. "Oh, how I should like to travel."

"Would you?" asked Jack, and his grey eyes brightened. "I'll take her all over the world if she likes to go," he thought, joyfully.

"Yes, I should, indeed," and Helen smiled and blushed bewitchingly, as she thought of her honeymoon, which would of course be spent in some foreign country.

It never occurred to her that money was an object to Frank, who, to tell the truth, had a very limited income, the horse he occasionally bestrode having been lent to him by a friend.

"You are very young and have plenty of time before you," said Jack, who was about five years older than Helen. "I never thought the world was such a pleasant place until quite lately, Miss Medhurst."

"Indeed," returned Helen, indifferently. "Shall we walk through the wood?"

She knew he would answer yes, and she had her own reasons for selecting that route, being now as anxious to avoid Frank as she had been to meet him a few minutes before.

The wood was pleasantly shady as they entered the leafy labyrinth, and ferns grew under the big trees in the damp places and wild flowers met the eye on every side. Jack insisted upon picking a bunch of flowers for Helen as he went along.

"I know you have hot-house flowers at home," he said, "but I like simplicity myself."

He held out his first love offering as he spoke, and Helen gratefully accepted it with a gracious smile.

A man, who was lying half buried in the cool, green ferns, saw the girl's bright smile and sparkling eyes, and lifting himself on his elbow looked after the young couple with a low cry of anger and incredulity.

Who was this tall, handsome giant with whom Helen was talking so gaily, Frank asked himself, with a bitter pang of jealousy.

What right had she to smile at any other man? All the smiles she had to bestow ought to be lavished on him. He wondered if this was the husband her father had chosen for her.

How confoundedly good-looking the fellow was with his Saxon face and tall, muscular figure. And to think of Helen simpering over his flowers. Haunted by jealous fear at one moment and reproaching himself for doubting her fidelity the next, he lay with his face hidden in his hands, a prey to conflicting emotions.

She was a weak, treacherous, deceitful woman, unworthy of his love, and he cursed the day when he had first met her and wondered why he could not tear her false image from his heart. But then again the remembrance of Helen's blue, steadfast eyes, and the words she had uttered when he asked her to be his wife, rang in his ears, and he told himself that his doubts were an insult to one so pure and innocent. Had his manhood deserted him that he could wrong her even in thought?

In all probability he was making a mountain out of a molehill, and his jealous fears were without foundation. He would try to think so at all events. But it was very strange that she had never tried to meet him, although he had lingered outside the walls of Medhurst Hall so often during the last few days.

He had been walking in the sun until he felt quite tired out, and had turned into the wood to rest for a time and think over the best means of communicating with Helen. More than once he had felt strongly tempted to go straight to the front door of Helen's house and ask to see her father, but he hesitated about doing this as he had no desire to get her into trouble, and he knew that Mr. Medhurst would blame them both most bitterly for those clandestine meetings, especially when he became acquainted with the fact that his daughter's lover was a poor man.

Frank had made up his mind to wait until Helen and her escort returned. It was not very pleasant to see them together, but he felt that he must remain where he was. Yes; he would stay there and watch them keenly as they passed by and try to detect if there was anything between them.

It seemed terribly hard to Frank that

he should have to sneak round the house and watch and wait on the chance of a few stolen meetings with Helen, whilst this new-comer had the privilege of being under the same roof with her, eating at the same table, and meeting her at all hours of the day.

And why was he more welcome than himself? Frank knew only too well that it was on account of his wealth. Mr. Medhurst's ambition was that his daughter should marry a wealthy man.

The time passed. Still they came not. Why were they so late?

Frank tore up the ferns with his nervous hands in his ungovernable and unreasoning anger. Was Helen to be stolen from him? The thought was maddening. By degrees he became calm again; it cost him a great effort, but he managed to compose himself by sheer force of will. He was a man and must not act like a child.

So with pale face and wild eyes, the demon of jealousy raging within him, he waited.

Slowly the minutes dragged their weary way, blue sky became gradually obscured by dark, threatening clouds, and he saw clearly that a thunderstorm was coming on.

But he heeded not the warning and remained at his post, even when the lightning flashed and the rumbling thunder shook the earth, although the rain poured down in torrents, drenching him to the skin.

The storm was not of long duration, and in a short time the sun was shining and the birds that had been silenced by the storm were again carolling gaily on the branches of the dripping trees.

The rain had ceased about half an hour when Frank recognised two people coming towards him. Helen's hand was on the handsome stranger's arm, and she was laughing merrily, little thinking that her lover lay concealed near at hand.

Fortunately they had been inside a cottage when the rain came on and had waited under shelter until it was over, the old woman, the owner of the place, hospitably offering them a cup of tea.

Frank followed them with his eyes until they were out of sight, and then rose to his feet with a weary sigh. He had seen enough, he told himself, as he hurried away in an opposite direction, his face pale and haggard, his lips tightly compressed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next day went by, and yet the next, and yet the next, like a bright dream of happiness to Jack, who began to think that he was making a favourable impression upon Helen; and so he was, but he had only succeeded in winning her sincere friendship—not her love—and hope was telling him a flattering tale. He had given his big boyish heart to one who was pledged to another, and lived in blissful ignorance of the fact that he had a rival, often telling himself that he was the first in the field and could hold his own against all comers.

He would not spoil his chance by being precipitate, but intended to wait patiently for some golden opportunity, when he would pour the story of his love into Helen's ear, and he hoped and believed that her answer would be "Yes."

Mr. Medhurst, watching the progress of affairs, saw with satisfaction that the young people liked each other, and made up his mind that the marriage was a settled thing. He predicted to himself that it would be a short courtship, and began to think of selecting a wedding-present for his beautiful daughter.

He really thought that they were a well matched couple and would be very happy together. It is only doing him justice to say that he would not have married his daughter to money and nothing else. He had known John Rogers since his infancy. He was a thoughtful, good fellow. What more could Helen want?

The girl had not been able to communicate with her lover for a whole week, and began to

feel very uneasy indeed and longed unexpressedly for a glimpse of his dark, handsome face.

She contrived to give Jack the slip one morning, but was compelled to return home without seeing Frank, disheartened and disappointed, although she kept her secret bravely and no one knew how she suffered.

But she was not angry with her lover, it was not to be expected that he could stand all day on one spot, and she felt that she ought to be very grateful to him for his prudence in keeping out of sight. The poor girl little knew how broken-hearted he was, believing her to be so fair and false.

Jack saw that she was dull, and was puzzled as to the cause. She seemed in good health and had a pretty good appetite, but he could not make her out in any way. He did all in his power to amuse her, and succeeded tolerably well.

He was very lively, for everything seemed to be going well with him, and Helen could not help joining in his fresh, spontaneous mirth, in spite of her anxiety about her handsome, dark-eyed lover who happened to be passing the house at the time, and hearing the sounds of merriment, and recognising the silvery laughter of Helen, went on his way feeling more angry and mortified than words can express, and cried out, in his agony:

"Oh, Heaven! to think that those red lips I have kissed could smile so falsely! I told her I could read her thoughts, but how she must have laughed in her sleeve when I gave utterance to such unmitigated folly."

Sometimes Helen, not liking to appear ungracious, would sing a pretty sentimental duet with Jack, who kept his eyes fixed upon her as he sang of love, never dreaming that her thoughts were far away, and perhaps flattering himself that it was his voice which had brought that dreamy expression to the girl's misty blue eyes.

In the daytime they rode and drove together and took long rambles in the wood, and they sometimes went on the river.

Jack had volunteered to teach Helen how to row, and he took her up the narrow creek where the yellow water lilies grew in such profusion.

Occasionally they went out for a day's fishing, but Jack always lost all his bites because he could not help looking at Helen instead of looking at his float.

The time passed all too quickly for Jack, who had never been so happy in his life. He and Helen were quite unconscious of the fact that their footsteps were dogged, that Frank was always close behind them in their long, solitary rambles, that whether on the water or on horseback the young man's angry eyes were always upon them.

Helen, secure in her innocence, would not have felt in the slightest degree uneasy if she had known it, although she would have been highly indignant at the want of faith if she had been told why he watched her so persistently.

If Frank had been a sensible man he must have seen at once that his suspicions against Helen were utterly without foundation, but his senses were obscured by the demon of jealousy, and he could not see that the love was all on one side, and that although Jack loved Helen with all his heart she regarded him more in the light of a brother than anything else.

Over and over again Frank had made up his mind to think no more of Helen, to dismiss her from his mind altogether, but he found it quite impossible to forget her. The image we have cherished in our hearts cannot be so easily effaced.

At length Jack began to have a dim suspicion that someone was watching them wherever they went, and a vague, uneasy feeling crept over him. Once looking back as they were returning from a long ramble, he fancied he saw a figure vanishing behind the trees, and two other times, while on the river, he caught sight of the figure again. Jack was very much puzzled to know what it meant, but he did not make any mention of what he had seen to Helen. Perhaps he feared that she would no longer accompany

him on those excursions he enjoyed so much if she thought that their movements were being watched.

One morning they started very early for a day's fishing, taking their lunch with them, as they were to remain out of doors for a good many hours. Jack was delighted with the prospect of spending a whole day alone with Helen.

The young fellow kept his honest grey eyes fixed upon the girl's pretty face half the time, and the fish nibbled away at the bait without interruption. But Helen, who was interested in what she was doing, never even noticed poor Jack's admiring glances.

"Hulloa!" he cried, as Helen jerked a large fish in the bottom of the boat, "you have caught a beauty this time, Miss Medhurst, and no mistake."

"Yes, it is a beauty," assented Helen; and then she gave a violent start of surprise as a familiar voice fell upon her ear, coming from the south bank of the river close where they were moored.

"A cruel amusement for a young lady," said Frank Osborn, lifting his hat, with a mocking smile on his dark, handsome face. "But Miss Medhurst is quite as skilful in giving pain to her fellow creatures as she is in the piscatorial art."

"Your remarks are very impertinent, sir," cried Jack, indignantly, while Helen changed colour and trembled in every limb.

"The truth is often impertinent," returned Frank, still with that mocking smile upon his lips, although there was no light of laughter in his eyes.

Jack began to think he had been drinking, but another glance convinced him that he was perfectly sober, and at the same time he recognised Frank as the man whom he had seen following them under the shadow of the tall elm trees.

"You are annoying this young lady," cried Jack, growing hot and angry, and instinctively doubling his fists. "The remarks you have made are most uncalled for, and you certainly look as if you ought to know better. I have noticed lately that someone has been dogging our footsteps, and if you are not the individual in question you must be his twin brother. Have the goodness to explain the meaning of your extraordinary conduct."

"Miss Medhurst will doubtless give you an explanation," returned Frank.

His stern face softened a little as he looked at the young athlete, who took a flying leap out of the boat and alighted by his side, scarcely hearing Helen's faint cry of terror in his indignation.

"I'll have the explanation from you," cried Jack, "and if you will just step behind those bushes 'I'll knock you down before I hear it."

"You would not find it such an easy task as you imagine," said Frank, measuring him with his eye.

He was not so tall as Jack, but they were both powerful men with finely developed muscles.

"Let's have a try, anyhow," returned Jack, with a warm flush on his fair, sunburnt face.

"I suppose you think that you have not done me injury enough," said Frank, bitterly. "Thank you, I don't want to fight—it is not my way of settling a dispute."

"What on earth are you talking about?" asked Jack, opening his blue-grey eyes. "I do you an injury! Why, I don't even know your name."

"Nevertheless, you have done me the greatest injury one man can do another," cried Frank, passionately. "You have stolen from me the woman I love. She had promised to be my wife before you ever met, and now she is going to throw me over for you. She loves me still, but your riches have dazzled her. Let her deny it if she can."

Helen, who was utterly dumbfounded by this unexpected outburst, sat motionless, and did not lift her drooping head or make any attempt to deny Frank's accusation.

"Does that look like innocence?" he cried. "Your wealth is perhaps too great a temptation

for any woman to resist, but be warned in time and do not marry a woman with no heart to give."

And with a loud, contemptuous laugh Frank rushed away, recklessly breaking through the bushes, while Jack stood transfixed with astonishment. Was the man a lunatic?

Jack—loyal, honest Jack—did not for a moment believe in the statement that Helen intended to sell herself for the sake of his money; but the idea that there might be some truth in the declaration that Frank was a discarded lover caused him a sharp contraction of the heart.

"It is terribly hot, isn't it?" he said, when he joined Helen in the boat; he looked away from her as he spoke with the delicacy of a gentleman.

If she liked to say anything about what had happened all well and good, but he would not be the first to broach the subject.

Helen made no reply, and Jack busied himself with his fishing tackle. His merry grey eyes had saddened a little, and an unconscious sigh escaped him. Was there any secret in the life of this girl of seventeen?

Poor Helen blushed painfully, and her eyes were dim with scalding tears. What must Jack think of her? She did not love him, but she valued his good opinion, which she had perhaps lost for ever through Frank's wild, reckless accusation. Her anger against Frank was very great. She felt that she could not forgive him for doubting her.

She had no fear that Jack would repeat what Frank had told him to her father. She knew that she could trust the good-tempered young giant, who sat puffing away at a big cigar, his attention concentrated upon his rod and line.

"You are tired, Miss Medhurst," he said, presently, but Helen could not tell how he had made the discovery, since his eyes were still resolutely averted from her pale, weary face. "Shall we give up fishing for to-day and return home?"

"I should very much prefer it if you do not mind," she answered, in a low tone of voice.

There was comfort in the quiet clasp of Jack's strong fingers as he helped her out of the punt. She knew then that he did not blame her, however much he might be puzzled at what he had heard.

"And I wanted him to catch some contagious fever and sicken and die," she thought, with a twinge of conscience. "Ah, but I did not know him then, dear old Jack!"

She glanced at him gratefully, but he was walking along with his eyes determinedly fixed upon the ground, and did not see the swift, bright look.

He had hoped that Helen would tell him the meaning of Frank's strange behaviour, and could not help feeling slightly disappointed.

He had arrived at the conclusion that there must have been a flirtation between the young man and Helen, who had perhaps rather encouraged him just to amuse herself.

He did not blame Helen, a mere bit of a girl, but he could not help feeling sorry for Frank while he thought of his wild, dark eyes and passionate, pale face. It was very hard on him, poor fellow, but Jack had read somewhere that:

Sorrow is the penalty we pay for life;
If hearts are broken and lives are blighted, yet the
stream ever bears us along,
And the world moves round on its axis, and the sun
and the moon shine on.

CHAPTER V.

Now that the first bitter trial of her life had come upon her, Helen longed inexpressibly for the mother who had died in her childhood. She wanted a mother to confide in and to whisper her troubles to as she nestled against her loving breast.

Her father, although kindness itself when she obeyed him implicitly, was very stern and harsh if thwarted in the most trivial matter.

She was very fond of him, and did not doubt that he meant everything for the best, but he could not fill the great void left by her mother's

early death—that dear mother who had been so young, so pretty, and so foolish, according to her father's account.

The more Helen dwelt upon Frank's conduct the less excuse she could find for it. He had always professed such perfect belief in her truth and constancy.

She did not reflect that he had not been put to the proof until lately, and that he was to be forgiven for feeling some annoyance at seeing the girl he loved so constantly in the society of another man. His mistake had been in losing his temper instead of awaiting the course of events.

Of course she could easily have set matters right by having an explanation with Frank, but she was too proud to stoop so far. If Frank thought her capable of deceit she would not go to the trouble of opening his eyes to the truth. She would leave it to Fate, and if they were parted for ever she was not to blame.

Mr. Medhurst and Jack and Helen were at dinner. The dining-room at Medhurst Hall was a pleasant apartment, with four bay windows, which afforded a pleasant view of sylvan scenery, in the rear distance lay the wood through which Helen had passed on the day when Frank's jealousy was first aroused, while beyond were the meadows and pasture land and fragrant clover fields.

The sky was one broad expanse of fire when one glanced towards the West, and the air was alive with the dreamy song of the birds. The crimson and gold of the sunset were reflected here and there on the shining river as it wound in and out among the trees, and about half a mile away was a carriage road, straight and white, along which a solitary equestrian was slowly walking his horse.

Helen recognised the horseman at once, as the flush on her beautiful face testified, but she lowered her lids and did not look up again until horse and rider had passed out of sight.

"I have a bit of news for you, Helen," said her father, when dessert had been set upon the table and the decorous manservant had withdrawn.

"Yes, papa," and Helen tried to look interested.

"Well," resumed Mr. Medhurst, holding up his wine-glass to the light, "who do you think is engaged to be married?"

"I have not the slightest idea," returned Helen, shaking her head. "Is it anyone with whom I am acquainted, papa?"

"You ought to know the rector's daughter tolerably well by this time," said her father, with a smile.

The subject of marriage was a very appropriate topic for these young people he told himself.

Helen could scarcely conceal her indifference, and did not succeed in hiding it from Jack. The young ladies might be well acquainted, but it was evident that they were not very good friends.

"Do I know the gentleman?" asked Helen, feeling that her father expected her to say something.

What did she care whom Rosaline was going to marry?

"No," returned Mr. Medhurst, "that's just where it is; the man is quite a stranger and not particularly well off. The rector is pleased though at the prospect of getting one of his girls off his hands at last. He is not a rich man by any means, and those boys of his are awfully expensive."

"I wonder Rosaline has not been married long ago," observed Miss Medhurst. "She has tried hard enough."

She was sorry for this sarcastic little speech directly it had passed her lips, for she could not help seeing the troubled expression on Jack's honest face and guessed instinctively that it was her hasty words that had brought it there.

What a horribly ill-tempered creature she was growing, to be sure. And yet she could not help feeling in the inmost recesses of her own heart that she had told the simple truth.

"Let me see, what is the young fellow's

name?" said Medhurst, reflectively. "Frank—Frank Osborn."

Helen gave a slight start, and all the colour faded from her face, leaving it as white as the damask table cloth. Jack looked at her in surprise and consternation, and hastily poured out a glass of wine, but the glance she gave him was so imploring that he checked the words that were on the tip of his tongue.

Mr. Medhurst was not a very observant old gentleman, and he merely thought that Jack was making himself very agreeable to Helen. How grateful the girl was for the ready tact which covered her agitation from her father's eyes. Jack's kindness of heart was never at fault, and he loved Helen so well that he would have died to save her a moment's pain.

"Jack," said Helen, calling him from the conservatory about half an hour later, "I want to speak to you."

The stalwart fellow obeyed at once, colouring with pleasure; he liked to hear his Christian name fall so naturally from those rosy lips, and longed to take the girl into his arms and hold her to his faithful heart, as they stood together in the rather dimly-lighted conservatory. But he folded his arms instead, and stood looking at her with a very gentle smile.

"Is there anything I can do for you?" he said, eagerly, in his pleasant, cheerful way, thrusting back all the passionate love that rose and surged in his heart.

He wanted to help Helen if he could, and not to frighten her. She was in trouble, poor girl, he could see that, and the trouble was connected in some way with the name of Frank Osborn. Could that be the young man whose dark face had haunted him ever since that scene on the bank of the river?

He waited patiently for the girl to speak.

"How can I ever tell you?" cried Helen; but she managed to tell him nevertheless, and to grow very eloquent over her unhappy little love story.

Jack's folded arms tightened across his breast as Helen's story demolished all his bright castles in the air. Well, he ought to have known from the first that he could never be a ladies' man, and it served him right for being such a conceited idiot as to think to win Helen's love.

"You haven't told me this story without an object," he said, kindly. "There is something I can do for you."

"Yes," answered Helen, "I want you to give him back this engagement ring."

She placed the little glittering circlet in his broad palm, and turned away as she spoke, burying her face in her hands. This was the one straw too much for Jack.

"My dear Miss Medhurst," he cried, putting his arm round the girl's sloping shoulders, "my dear little girl, don't cry, for my sake. I can't bear to see it. You must not give way, you know. I have a presentiment that all will come right in the end; it always does in the story books, you know, and the lovers, after passing through all sorts of difficulties, are left comfortable and happy at the end of the last chapter."

Helen smiled through her tears, she could not help it, and that smile delighted poor Jack's heart. He had forgotten all about his own disappointment in his distress at the girl's grief.

"You will do what I ask?" she said, glancing up at his fresh face and blue-grey eyes, and thinking how strong and true he looked, this man who had never been used to the society of ladies, and whom she had despised a little for his awkwardness at their first meeting.

"I will do all I can for you," he answered, evasively, looking at her little snowflake of a hand, and wondering what she would say if he yielded to the impulse which prompted him to press his lips to it. He resisted the inclination, however, and let it fall with a smothered sigh.

He wasn't going to make a fool of himself and scare away the girl's sweet confidence. She had told him her little secret, and he would rather do anything than make her regret that it had passed out of her own keeping. Helen should

look upon him as a friend if he could not hope for anything else.

CHAPTER VI.

On the following day Jack lounged down to the village with a big cigar between his teeth, his dogs at his heels, and Helen's poor little engagement ring in his pocket. He was thinking deeply, to judge from the two deep marks between his eyebrows.

"I'll put things straight and then I'll bring my visit to a close as rapidly as I can and go back to the old life," he mused. "Poor little soul! how she must love that fellow to grieve so over the news of his engagement! While I am in the village I think I may as well take a peep at the girl he is going to marry."

And Jack paused, with his hands on the gate which led into the churchyard, hesitated for a moment, and then entered God's Acre, followed to the very door of the sacred edifice by his canine favourites, when he bade them stop where they were and await his return, an injunction which they at once obeyed, stretching their huge bodies out at full length on the cool stones.

Then Jack took off his hat and entered the church, walking softly up the aisle and sitting down in one of the free seats.

The careless, sunny expression had vanished from his face, and had he been a woman one might have sworn that his eyes were misty.

Someone was playing the organ, and the rich, monorous waves of melody rolled overhead, carrying Jack back to the time when he was a boy and used to sit with his mother in the old family pew.

"I hope she is not the organist," muttered Jack; "it would not make any difference, of course, but I hope she isn't."

He had not cared particularly for Handel or Mozart until he fell in love, but the refining influence of his affection for Helen had utterly revolutionised his tastes. He might go back to the old life, but it would never have the same relish for him again.

Presently the music ceased, and a young lady, clad in a silver-grey dress, came down from the organ loft, opening her eyes in pleasurable wonderment when she beheld the handsome young man who was sitting so quietly in the free seats, having evidently stolen in to listen to her playing.

Jack had not even the most superficial knowledge of music, but he could tell when he liked a thing and when he did not, and he had really enjoyed his half-hour in the shady church, with its cool grey shadows and long rays of sunshine stealing in through the stained-glass windows. Therefore his thanks to the young lady who had afforded such pleasure was real and unaffected.

He looked at her as she spoke and came to the conclusion that she had rather a nice face. Jack had a weakness for using the word nice in the wrong place.

"Have I the pleasure of addressing Miss Hardcastle?"

"I am a Miss Hardcastle," returned the young lady, frankly, "but my eldest sister, Rosaline, has the most right to that designation, I suppose."

Jack hastened to apologise for his mistake, saying the first thing that came in his head in his anxiety to continue the conversation.

Miss Gertrude Hardcastle was a very pleasant young lady, but he was curious to see her sister. His wish was gratified sooner than he expected, for he was still talking with Gertrude Hardcastle when someone outside the church door gave a little shriek.

"Oh, these horrid dogs!" cried a rather shrill female voice. "What on earth are they doing here?"

Jack scolded his dogs, although the unfortunate animals had done nothing to deserve it, and Rosaline glanced at him seriously beneath her long eyelashes as he did so.

"I am with Mr. Medhurst," said Jack, when he was informally introduced to Gertrude's eldest

sister. "This is a pretty place enough, but horribly dull."

Rosaline assented eagerly and assured him to her, at least, the place was unbearable. She looked sulky and discontented as she spoke, and Jack could see that the elder Miss Hardcastle had rather a sharp temper of her own.

"I suppose you will consider me a lucky fellow when I tell you I can live where I like?" he said. "An old uncle whom I have never seen was good enough to leave me a large fortune because I was named after him."

Rosaline lifted her sulky eyes and regarded him with keen interest. All her life she had longed to be rich, to be able to spend money right and left in ministering to her own comfort.

But wealthy men were scarce in —, and failing money Rosaline had done her best to secure good looks in her future husband. Frank had proposed to her in a fit of pique, and she had taken him at his word.

This was Jack's first meeting with Rosaline, but not the last, and it soon became quite a common occurrence for him to lounge past the gates of the Rectory garden and stop to have a talk with Miss Hardcastle in the early morning or the twilight.

Helen began to find herself a little neglected and to wonder at the change. She wanted to ask him what he had done with her ring, but it happened somehow that he was never alone with her for a moment.

She sighed to herself as she thought of those first days of his visit, when he had followed her like her shadow.

But Jack had apparently found a new attraction, and day by day his friendship with Miss Hardcastle increased, until they were quite on familiar terms. The girl's lips sometimes curled as she listened to Jack's constant allusions to his great wealth, but she was careful not to let him see it.

She would have liked to possess money, but would not have cared to speak about it at every opportunity as Jack seemed so fond of doing.

One starry night Jack stood at the gate of the Rectory garden talking with Rosaline; the country lay before them dark and still, with a few scattered lights afar-off farms and homesteads gleaming here and there; a cool breeze rustled the leaves above Jack's head and stirred Rosaline's pretty ribbons and laces, sending a long coil of silky hair across the young man's face.

"What pretty hair!" said the young man, touching it and looking sentimental. "Do you know, Miss Rosaline, I consider it a crying shame that all the good-looking girls should go and get engaged so quickly. Of course you've promised yourself to some farmer or country parson?"

"No," returned Rosaline, coolly and deliberately, "I am not engaged."

"What a little liar you are to be sure!" was Jack's mental comment.

He said, aloud:

"Then the rumour of your engagement is utterly without foundation."

"Utterly," returned Miss Hardcastle; but although Jack continued to talk over the gate and look sentimental for about half an hour he did not commit himself.

"She'll give the other fellow the sack to-morrow," was Jack's characteristic thought as he walked home under the starlit sky, smoking a big meerschaum pipe. "I'll bring Helen and her lover together yet, if I break my heart in doing it. What does it matter so long as that dear little soul is happy?"

On the following morning, as Jack had prognosticated, Frank Osborn received his dismissal. He was told very cautiously that Miss Hardcastle had changed—information that astonished him not a little when he remembered how Rosaline had sought for an offer from him.

But he felt relieved, for it absolved him from the consequences of his own folly in metaphorically cutting off his own nose to be revenged upon his face.

He considered Rosaline a very pretty woman, but a man does not want to marry every pretty woman he meets, and it is nearly always some-

MISCELLANEOUS.

thing besides mere beauty which attracts him to the woman he eventually makes his wife.

Rosaline soon had cause to regret that she had forgotten the old proverb, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," for after she had dismissed Frank Mr. Rogers's visits to the garden gate began to drop off, and he seldom lingered for more than a few moments when he did come that way.

The young fellow's plot had succeeded better than he could have hoped, and it only remained for him to tell Helen what he had done, and ask her to give that foolish, hot-headed Frank an explanation and make him understand that she had always been true to the core.

It was his turn to call Helen out, and he stood before her with a white, set look on his face as he told her hurriedly of the broken engagement. He had paved the way and it would be quite easy for Helen to make Frank understand his mistake.

He paused, expecting to receive a torrent of thanks, but to his surprise Helen sat down on an elaborately rustic seat and took out her pocket-handkerchief.

Her tears irritated Jack. Why should she cry when he had brought her such good news? He had tried to make her bright and happy and she had no business to look so woebegone.

"Are you afraid of the gov—your father?" he asked. "You need not bother about him; I daresay I shall be able to talk him over. It is not exactly the right sort of thing for a father to sell his daughter."

Helen lifted her head and looked at him with something in her eyes which sent a curious thrill through the poor fellow's heart. He turned away and began pacing to and fro, wishing that the girl would not gaze at him with those large, misty eyes. They had almost made him forget for one brief moment that she belonged heart and soul to another man.

"I shall have to cut this short," he muttered, and then he said, addressing Helen, who had dried her tears, "I've told you all you want to know, and so I'll go out into the avenue and have a stroll. Oh! by-the-bye, I had almost forgotten to give you back the ring."

He held it out to her as he spoke, but she did not offer to take it, and for the second time that night she looked Jack full in the face.

"I shall send it back to him all the same," she said, simply. "I could never be happy with anyone who has so little control over his own temper. You would not have been so ready to think badly of me, Jack."

"Helen," and Jack went plump down on his knees and put his arm round the girl's slender waist, "am I indeed to be made so intolerably happy after all? Do you mean it really?"

"I do mean it, if you are willing to take me after all those wicked clandestine meetings," returned Helen, pressing her cheeks against Jack's sunburnt face. "I did love him once, you know, and it seems so strange that I cannot feel the same now. True love ought to be eternal."

"So it is," said Jack, stoutly, as he gave the girl a shy kiss.

He was not very lavish of his kisses, but then Helen could see in his eyes how happy she had made him.

And so they sent Frank back his engagement ring. Helen thought it would be better so; he would forget her the more easily if he did not know that he had lost her through his own fierce, ungovernable temper.

Mr. and Mrs. Rogers are the happiest couple in existence, although Rosaline, now married to her father's curate, does sneer a little when people speak of their devotion.

They are blessed with five stout-limbed urchins and a blue-eyed baby girl, who is pronounced by good authority to be the very image of mamma.

Frank's loss was Jack's gain, but the happy husband often pities him in his heart when he thinks of his dark, passionate face. He is sorry for him, very sorry for him, although he cannot regret that he was the winner.

THE Bill for legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister, which is to be brought into Parliament this year, will contain a provision making lawful the marriage of a widow with a deceased husband's brother.

ANOTHER effort is going to be made to get the claimant out of prison. There is a little mystery made of the inducement which is to be employed to those who hold him with the strong hand of the law.

THE dome of the colossal Palais de Justice, Brussels, now approaching completion, and which was to have been of copper, is to be constructed of papier maché, and will weigh about 16 tons.

A SOCIETY has been formed in New York entitled the "Yellow Ribbon Army." The organization is exclusively composed of old maids. They opened the season with a ball.

THERE will be three Royal celebrations of silver weddings this year. That of the King and Queen of Sweden on the 6th June, also of the Princess Ida Lichenstein and her husband on the 4th June, and the Grand Duke Michael of Russia and the Princess Olga on the 28th of August.

WANDERING children are no longer to be allowed to leave Italy. Every child who leaves the country is to be provided with proper papers. This is to prevent the poor little things from being sold to speculators for the sake of begging abroad, etc. Every country will thank the Italian Government for this measure.

THERE is now living at Rainey, near Devises, an old lady, Mrs. Jane Patrick, who has completed her 100th year. The exact date of her birth is uncertain, but her baptism is registered as having taken place in January, 1762. She is hale and hearty, and recently had a small party in honour of her birthday. It may also be mentioned that Mrs. Patrick holds some of the parish offices.

FERRAS, a village of the Grisons, in the valley of Inn, is menaced with ruin, owing to the sinking of the ancient moraine on which it is built. The moraine is moving slowly forward, and as it moves the houses are crushed or fall asunder. Engineers have been called to the spot to see if anything can be done to avert the impending destruction of the village; if not it will have to be abandoned.

THE revolver is, in all probability, destined to be shortly discarded from use in the army, navy, Irish constabulary, and other Government services, in favour of a new weapon, the mitrailleur pistol, in which there are four barrels, which are loaded at once by a patent quadruple cartridge big enough to afford good hold to the finger. Forty shots per minute can be discharged, and the empty cartridges ejected automatically.

MANY people have complained of feeling ill after eating what they afterwards thought were stale oysters. But the microscope has now shown that this has been caused by "germs" present in the liquid of the oyster. These "germs" are similar to those found in sewage—hence the deduction that the presence of sewage-pipes near oyster beds has a poisonous effect upon the oysters. When the oysters were submitted to analysis it was found that the fact asserted by the microscopist was fully corroborated.

IN California when the gold was first found men were millionaires in a month—sometimes in a week. Twenty dollars a day were a regular amount obtained in 1849 and 1850. In nine months one man made 50,000 dollars, and another wrote home of a gold digger: "He has so much gold that he don't know what to do with it." Two girls who swept crossings one day were sent to a boarding school; and an Irishman sent home a draft for 10,000 dollars and a "trifle" of jewellery, closing his letter to his wife with "Try and learn to be a lady as fast as ye can, for when I come home I'll make you as rich as a queen." Captain Sutter, who discovered a quicksilver mine in California, was a Swiss, who served as an officer in the body guard of

Charles X., emigrated to America, and when nearly starving went to squat in the wilds of California. The mine he discovered was the third in the world; and he carefully kept his secret till he secured a grant of 40,000 acres from the Mexican Government. In a short time he employed 100 Indian miners; and was, in 1850, the richest man in the world. His constant transmission of raw gold to his New York agents excited suspicion; and in spite of all his caution, Mr. Dimond, son of the famous American shipbuilder, fathomed the secret and astonished the world by its promulgation.

FROM Washington comes the report that the Pension Committee is of opinion that Mrs. Garfield should receive an annual pension of 5,000 dollars, to date from the death of the President.

A NOBLE example has been set by the Bishop of Lincoln, who has lately announced his intention of devoting one fifth of his episcopal income to a fund which is being raised to increase the church accommodation in the borough of Nottingham.

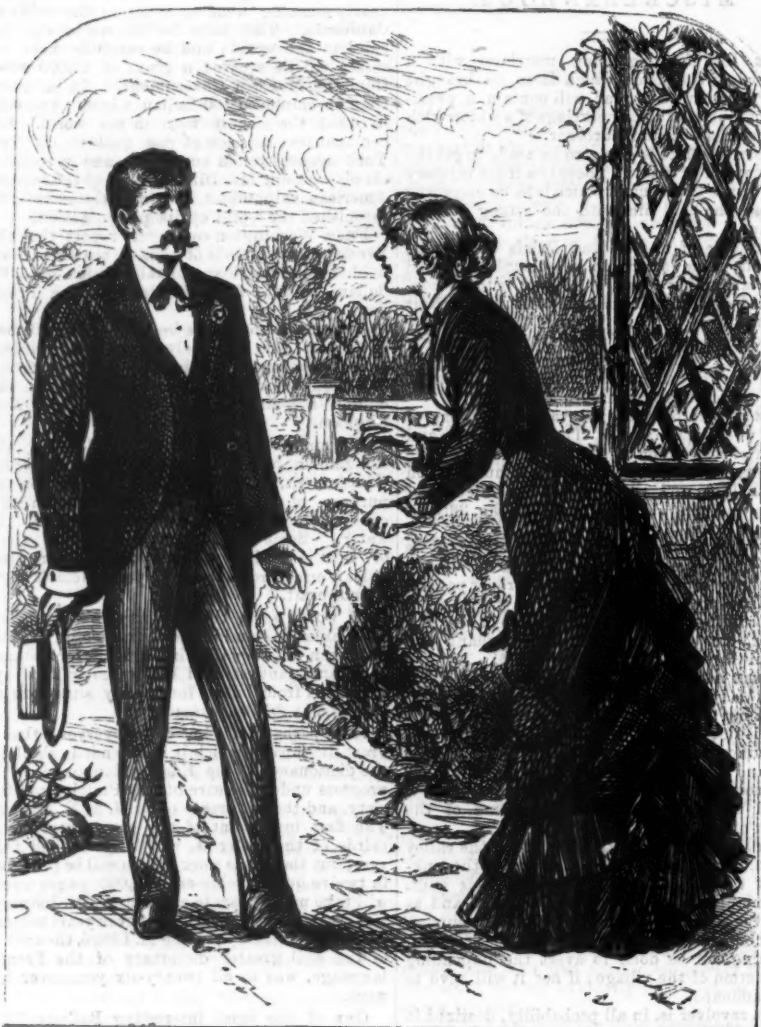
WE understand that M. Teodoresco, the Roumanian, under the immediate auspices of his Government, has arrived in London for the purpose of patenting his invention in this country for navigating vessels under the water. Some particulars were lately given of this invention, which practically realises Jules Verne's romance of Captain Nemo's mysterious craft.

IT would seem that poverty exists in New York among the middle class which is happily not given to be equalled in England; for instance one transatlantic official had recently 2,000 applications from ladies for twenty situations as cupboys, at 26 10s. a month.

IT is, perhaps, not known to everyone that a great dictionary, which it is intended shall be the dictionary of the English language, is in progress under the care of the Philological Society, and the editorship of Dr. J. A. N. Murray. The first instalment of the great work, two-thirds of the letter A, will be published this year, but the whole work, which will be probably in twelve quarto volumes of 2,000 pages each, will take many years to complete. Dr. Johnson, the great lexicographer, took seven years to complete his dictionary; while M. Littré, the author of the still greater dictionary of the French language, was in all twenty-six years over his work.

ONE of the most interesting Railway Bills affecting the Metropolis announced to be introduced in the coming Session is the Mid-Metropolitan Railway Pneumatic System Bill. The route mapped out is much the same as that of the Mid-London Railway scheme promoted in 1872. With the exception of a short length near Shepherd's Bush, the entire railway will be formed by tunnelling, at such a depth as to avoid all existing obstacles, and will consist of two separate lines of tubular way about twelve feet in diameter, lined with cast iron throughout. The carriages are to be lighted by electricity, and have a clear passage or gangway down the centre. The pneumatic power for working the railway, it is proposed, should be generated at two or three permanent stations, whence it is to be transmitted to the several points required by means of hydraulic pressure.

THE Chinese immigration which has ceased in California has commenced here, and the Eastern philosophers show a rare appreciation for West End London. Westquinnia is their special district, and they share the occupation of it with the large army of retired Indians who invariably find their London habitation north of the Park. The Japanese Embassy being also in that quarter of town the West End is beginning to get almost oriental. Some months ago there were two or three instances of perambulators, charged with English children, wheeled down from Prince's Square or Leicester Square to Kensington Gardens by male Japanese nurses. But a more startling novelty has just asserted itself. A Chinese doctor has taken up his residence among us, and is prepared to see patients of all nationalities.



["FRAULEIN LINA!" HE REPEATED. "HOW DARE YOU!" CRIED SHE.]

THE RAILROAD TICKET.

A SHORT STORY.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

THE train was on the point of starting as Max Ingersoll entered the railway station of the quiet old German town where he had been halting for a few days. He got his ticket, fortunately, but the instant after the clerk shut the window of his office with a bang.

Ingersoll hurried out upon the platform, where the guard opened the door of an empty carriage, and Ingersoll sprang in, portmanteau in hand.

"How many minutes yet?" he asked.

"About half a one," the guard answered.

"Just time to light a cigar," thought Ingersoll.

And he put his hand in the breast-pocket of his coat to take out his cigar case. All at once his face changed.

"I can't have forgotten it," he muttered, as his hands flew from one pocket to another with a rapidity worthy of a conjurer. "By Jove! I have thought, left it on the table in my bedroom; what infernal stupidity! I must have a weed by some means. No use to ask that brute of a guard. Maybe the station-master would send—there must be a tobacco-stall—"

His sentence died away unfinished. He was rising to lean out of the open window when his ear caught the sound of a girlish voice, saying quickly, and in very agitated tones:

"But I entreat, the ticket-office was shut. I will pay at the first station. I must, must go to Nuremberg."

"You can't go without a ticket. It's against the rules. You will have to wait for the two-o'clock train," responded an inflexible voice.

"I cannot; indeed, I cannot; it is very, very important. Oh, I must go!" cried the girlish voice—such a sweet, musical voice, with a piteous quiver in it, which showed that the speaker was near tears.

Ingersoll thrust his head out of the carriage and saw a young lady standing at a little distance in a dark green travelling-dress and picturesque Tyrolese hat. She was pretty enough to move even a German railway official. But the station-master was inexorable.

"Stand back, if you please," he cried. "You can't go, I say."

"But I must! I must!"

"You can't go. Stand back," was the only reply.

All this of course passed in a few seconds. But during them Ingersoll had made another discovery. Besides his cigar-case, he had left behind at the hotel a little packet of important letters which had been that very morning forwarded to him, and as yet only partially read.

The station-master, as he spoke, had begun ringing the bell. The girl had uttered a low cry. Ingersoll paused no longer, but seized his portmanteau, threw it out, and sprang after it.

"Here's a ticket," he exclaimed, thrusting his into the girl's hand.

At the same moment he fairly snatched her up in his arms and lifted her into the carriage, which was already in motion. A porter, standing by, had just time to shut the door as the train swept away.

Ingersoll saw the young lady lean out of the window, her face eloquent with thanks. Her portmanteau was in her hand and she was trying to extricate money from its recesses. Then the train steamed on; he caught one glance of gratitude and she was gone.

"The prettiest creature I ever set eyes on," muttered Ingersoll.

He picked up his portmanteau as he spoke and turned to leave.

"The lady has good reason to be obliged to you, sir," said a smothered voice at his elbow. There stood the porter who had shut the coupe door, and when Max glanced at him he saw his shrewd, ugly face puckered into a perfect network of wrinkles in his efforts to keep from laughing audibly. "It's not often nowadays that a German gentleman would do so much for a stranger. No, nor one of those rascally French either, for all they brag so much about their politeness."

The fairly jeering tone in which the words were spoken, and an unrestrained titter from the station-master, increased Max's irritation to such an extent that he quite forgot his dignity.

"I have the good luck to be an Englishman," quoth he. "We are in the habit of treating ladies courteously in my country."

Then he was so annoyed at having made his speech that he condescended to further explanation before he knew what he was about.

"I found I had forgotten some important letters. I should have had to stop over for the two-o'clock train, in any case."

In a second he was more vexed than ever, to catch himself explaining, especially when he saw that his hearers were incredulous.

"Be good enough to take charge of my portmanteau till I come back, and let me find you in the way when I get here," he said, with cold severity, to the porter.

Max walked off furious when he had spoken, the angrier at the chorus of low chuckles that followed him. When he reached his hotel he learned that his letters and cigar-case had already been safely put away by the inn-keeper till they should be sent for.

He read his correspondence, wrote two or three epistles, strolled about till noon, took an early dinner, and had coffee, and then went to the station. But on the way he was in a maze of pleasantly vague dreams, as he had been all the morning.

Wherever he looked he saw always the same object—an exquisite, girlish face, with heavenly blue eyes, under the shadow of a Tyrolese hat; and no matter what sound he heard it was half deadened by the pathetic tones of a girlish, pleading voice.

"Have I fallen in love at first sight, and with a person I may never see again?" he asked himself, scornfully.

Then he swore mentally that he would see the face again, and soon too; and felt also a shrewd suspicion that he really was in love, absurd as it might seem.

At the station the porter came up with his portmanteau.

"You see I did not forget, sir," said the man, touching his cap politely. "I have been on the look-out for you. There's a gentleman down by the café who wants to see you."

"A gentleman who wants to see me?" repeated Ingersoll, surprised.

"It's on account of the young lady." And now the porter smiled. "The young lady you gave your ticket to, sir."

Ingersoll followed the man to the café at the further end of the platform. Here the porter addressed himself to a gentleman at that instant coming out of the café.

Ingersoll took a quick survey of the stranger—a stout, rather red-faced person of fifty-five or so.

At the first words the porter spoke this person hurried forward and lifted his hat with ceremonious politeness. Max returned the salute.

"I beg your pardon for the intrusion," said he.

"Not at all," said Max. "You wished to see me."

"The porter tells me, sir, that you were to have left by the half-past ten train, but that you gave up your ticket to a young lady, who reached here too late to procure one."

Max bowed, and looked still more curiously at his interlocutor; for it was plain that his measured mode of speech was an effort to hide anxiety, anger, or strong emotion of some kind.

"A young lady in a dark green dress and Tyrolean hat," pursued the old gentleman, in the same laboriously assumed tone of composure.

"Yes, that was her dress, I believe," replied Max.

"Ah!" said the stout gentleman, evidently much relieved. "Will you have the kindness to tell me what station the ticket was for?"

A new thought struck Max. Compliance with the stranger's request might be far from a favour to the blue-eyed damsel. Yet what possible excuse could he find for declining to give the desired information? His momentary hesitation caused the other to make a movement of impatience.

"Perhaps I might ask—" said Max.

Then he stopped, and altered his beginning to:

"May I inquire what special interest—"

"I am the young lady's father, sir," interrupted the elderly gentleman; and now his voice was as impatient as his face. "Her father. My name is Heinrich Holdeniss."

Her father! Ingersoll remembered having been told by the loquacious landlord that the fine villa on the hill outside of the town belonged to Herr Holdeniss, a retired merchant, and one of the wealthiest and most important personages the place could boast.

"The ticket was Nuremburg. I had heard the young lady tell the station-master that was where she wished to go," returned Max, quickly, and in the most obliging tone.

"I thank you," said the gentleman, with another ceremonious lifting of his hat, which, of course, Max imitated.

Herr Holdeniss motioned to the porter, who was standing at a little distance, and put some money in his hand, saying:

"Get me a ticket for Nuremburg—second-class."

While lighting a cigar Max furtively watched him, and decided that the look of relief in his face was proof that his previous agitation had been caused by anxiety.

"By the way," said the Herr, "which class was your ticket for?"

"Second," said Max. "I am too old a traveller to waste money on a first in Germany."

"Ah," said that gentleman, "the porter told me you were an Englishman—but that must be a mistake—you speak German like a native."

"Yes, I am an Englishman. But my grandmother was a German, and brought me up to speak the language."

"So," returned Herr Holdeniss, who had taken out his pocket-book and extricated some money. "I cannot repay your kindness, but I can replace the price of the ticket."

Of course no refusal was possible; so Max bowed, and took the offered florins, saying:

"I am very happy to have been able to be of service to your daughter; she seemed so exceedingly anxious—so distressed, when she found that she must lose the train."

"Ah!" said Herr Holdeniss again, but in a

less cheerful tone, and took a pinch of snuff.

"An Englishman? Always courteous to ladies, the English. A fine country—a noble country—the most interesting I ever visited."

"So you have been there?" said Max.

"Oh, yes. Spent twelve months, partly on business, partly to have a change, just after my poor wife's death, four years ago; my daughter went with me; she was only fourteen then."

The utterance of that name gave Max an additional interest in the subject of the Herr's travels.

"Was your daughter as much pleased as yourself?" he asked.

"Oh, yes. Girls always like everything new. I put her to school in London for six months. She speaks English perfectly. I am not a bad hand at it myself," he added, and burst into the language, which he spoke fluently enough, though with such an execrable accent that Max only understood about half of a valuable account of a visit to England.

The porter came back with the ticket at this moment and informed the two gentlemen that it was time to take their places. His practised eye speedily lighted upon an empty coupé, toward which he conducted the pair.

"If you do not object to our making the journey together?" said Herr Holdeniss, treating Max to another wave of his hat.

"I shall be delighted," cried Max, with an evident sincerity, which would have surprised his most intimate friends had they looked at the stout party without having first known that he had a pretty daughter.

"This is very comfortable," said Herr Holdeniss. "I have a great many good friends in England. I wonder if we possess mutual acquaintances there?"

Upon this hint Max gave his name, and added particulars in regard to himself that he was not in the habit of bestowing upon strangers. Sure enough, not only did Herr Holdeniss know a number of his friends, but when he went to England had taken a letter of introduction to one of Max's uncles, who had been very civil to the traveller.

"I remember his speaking of a nephew who had just graduated from Oxford with great honours and had gone abroad," said Herr Holdeniss; "that was you, I suppose?"

"I don't know about the great honours," said Max, laughing.

"I do," said Herr Holdeniss. "And have you been over here ever since?"

"I went back once, for a few months only."

"Hum!" quoth Herr Holdeniss. "So you don't mean to have a business or a profession?"

"Oh, I don't propose to be an idler," cried Max, eager to produce a good impression, "but—but—well, I have not been obliged to hurry in making a choice," he added, a little confused between his desire to excuse his procrastination and his dislike of uttering what might seem a snobbish allusion to his large fortune.

"So!" ejaculated Herr Holdeniss; and his tone showed that he quite understood the case.

But what Max wanted was to persuade his new acquaintance to talk of his daughter, and, if possible, to induce him to give some explanation of her journey, which had evidently been undertaken with an attempt at secrecy. Presently some remark of the other's enabled him to say:

"So the porter did not recognise Fraulein Holdeniss?"

"No; both he and the station-master are new people here. I should have gone to her aunt's at a venture. I didn't like to telegraph, for my sister-in-law is an invalid and easily alarmed. It was all right enough. The whole thing was a whim—a girlish caprice; girls are made up of them."

He was looking at once vexed and amused; and now had recourse to his snuff-box, and muttered something to himself, of which Max only caught:

"If she had waited to hear she might have saved herself a wild-goose chase and me too."

But now he began to talk of other matters. Yet though their conversation was so free that by the time their two hours' journey came to an

end they were on the most friendly terms, not one word further of explanation did Max get in regard to Miss Lina Holdeniss's departure, which looked so much like a flight from her parent's roof.

Still, the old gentleman talked a good deal about his daughter incidentally in giving details of his own past, which he did with great freedom, and in a very interesting manner. Max learned that he had commenced life penniless, but had years ago retired from business with a fortune, which, according to moderate Teutonic ideas, was more than ample.

He had had his little romance too, German-like, and could still dwell, with a certain degree of romantic feeling, upon its memory, elderly and stout and given to snuff-taking as he was.

He narrated his idyl to be sure while eating a sausage and some black bread, which he had bought at a station, but there were tears in his eyes all the same. He had loved and been loved by a young lady belonging to a family who could write Von before their name, and who cast her off when she insisted on marrying beneath her.

But the two had been very happy, and though her husband was poor when she accepted him, before a decade elapsed he could surround her with every comfort and such luxuries as suited their simple tastes.

"She was an angel," sighed Herr Holdeniss. "The most wonderful combination of intellect and sweetness. Ach, Gott! to hear her repeat Schiller and Goethe was music. She could make such coffee as I shall never drink again, and the real recipe for cream-cabbage died with her—died with her."

And Herr Holdeniss gulped down his sigh and his last bit of sausage together.

There was one of the deceased lady's relatives who had not deserted her, he went on to say—a sister a few years older than herself. This sister had married a rich old man with a title, who had treated her very ill, but he had been a long while dead, and his widow now lived contentedly at her country-seat a few miles from Nuremburg.

Aunt Caroline, Frau von Kleuze, was very fond of her niece. It was to her the young lady had gone this morning, and then Herr Holdeniss looked vexed and amused again as he added:

"But whether this time she will not have had to pass a bad half-hour—the Aunt Caroline is very particular."

Then he checked himself in the most provoking manner, and began to talk of the celebrated cities he had visited, to the great exasperation of Max, till he secretly cursed those places and all connected with them.

The train at length puffed into the Nuremburg station. Max had been haunted by a mad hope that his new friend might ask him to go out with him to Ledenthal. But no! The new friend expressed renewed pleasure at the acquaintance; learned what hotel Max meant to put up at; said he should call if he stopped over the next day, but gave no hint that a visit on Max's part would be agreeable to himself or the mistress of Ledenthal.

I regret to say that Max internally called him "an old, sausage-gobbling German for!" Even elegant young men can be very inelegant in their reflections under sufficient cause for irritation.

Max, being close to the door, got out of the carriage first. As Herr Holdeniss was descending his foot slipped and he would have fallen except for his companion's timely aid. As it was the old gentleman had twisted his ankle sufficiently to make the pain very severe for a few moments, and he uttered numerous groans, interspersed with sundry German oaths, each a yard long.

When he grew quieter Max said:

"Take my arm and give me your travelling-bag. Lean on me—so. That's right."

They passed through the station and out upon the broad grass-plot, decorated with flowers and shrubs, and sat down on a bench to rest for a few moments.

"I am better now," Herr Holdeniss said. "I believe I shall take a turn or two on the turf—that will put my ankle straight."

If the venerable parent's heart was not harder than a rhinoceros's hide, Max thought, it would soften under his tender attention, and he aided the Herr in his little promenade with as much solicitude as a mother would her lame child.

But he received no invitation to Ledenthal in spite of this, and that was what the sly young man was after.

"A friend of mine lives quite near the station," said Holdeniss. "I must stop and speak with him. I shall walk to his house. So good bye. A thousand, thousand thanks. I am charmed to have met you. Adieu, adieu!"

He was gone, and Max, instead of seeking a hack, strolled away to the further end of the lawn and sat down under a linden tree and up-braided fate and fathers, and then fell to dreaming of those blue eyes that had looked so gracefully at him earlier in the day. He would see them again, he vowed, finally, in spirit of parent or Aunt Caroline, and soon too.

Sooner than he imagined. He was roused by the rustle of a woman's dress, looked up and started to his feet, for there, only a few paces away, was the lovely girl in a dark green dress and Tyrolean hat; and she was more lovely than ever as she half paused and glanced towards him with a smile at once embarrassed and mischievous.

"Fraulein Lina!" he exclaimed, in a voice of delight, and he hurried toward her, so bewildered by this unexpected bliss that he hardly knew what he said or did. "You here—you have not gone out to your aunt's at Ledenthal?"

"Not yet," she replied, smiling and blushing. "My courage failed—I was afraid she would scold me, though she never does. So I determined to wait and go by the post-carriage that leaves after this train comes in. I saw you and papa; where has papa gone?"

This address, speaking as if to a person whom she knew, completed Max's bewilderment, equal though he was usually to any emergency; and to increase his dazed state she still regarded him with that mingling of fun and embarrassment.

"He has gone on to his friend near the station. He will get a carriage then to drive out to your aunt's, expecting to find you, Fraulein Lina."

"So you told him where the ticket you gave me was for?" she asked, laughing outright, though the pink in her cheeks deepened to damask.

"Yes—he—I—oh! I hope I did not do wrong?"

"Oh, no—quite, quite right!" She tried to subdue the confusion which rendered her so beautiful, and went on: "I should have come out when I saw you and him; I was there, behind the thicket reading, but I thought I'd better let him get to my aunt's first—only I was curious to know why you waited. And I've not thanked you for the ticket—and, oh! I must pay you."

"But your father did that," he said.

"Ah! did he? Well, you will let me thank you?"

Now she looked terribly embarrassed and as if she had a mind to run away, but stood her ground.

"It was very kind of you—and—now I will admit that it was childish and silly of me to run away—but—but, well, nobody must ask me to explain, else I shall run away from Ledenthal also."

The glance and smile which accompanied this speech dizzied Max out of his last faint gleam of sense; he knew that he was going to utter words that would be both mad and impertinent, still he could not refrain, he must speak.

"Fraulein Lina!" he cried; but was checked by the headlong approach of a little man in a porter's garb, shrieking:

"Fraulein, Fraulein, the post is starting! I have hunted for you everywhere. Quick, quick! they won't wait."

The young girl started off with the fleetness

of a deer, looked back over her shoulder, and waved her hand, crying:

"Till we meet, adieu, adieu!"

Positively she had crossed the lawn before Max recovered himself sufficiently to follow. Away he darted, stumbled over some obstacle, fell flat, picked himself up, and rushed on, reaching the side of the station building just in time to see the post-waggon drive off with Lina Holdeniss therein. The carriage turned, she saw him, waved her hand again, and then was gone.

Max stood for a few moments stupefied; then remembered he had left his valise by the bench where he and Herr Holdeniss had sat and went back to get it. As he stooped to take it up he saw a large-sized morocco letter-case lying on the ground beside it—Herr Holdeniss's letter-case—Max had seen it in his hand two or three times.

Here was a direct interposition of destiny in his favour. However mad Max might still be in regard to most matters he was perfectly clear and sane on one point—it was his duty to take that letter-case out to Ledenthal with as little delay as possible.

He drove to an hotel, ordered a room, and went through a pretence of dining; then changed his clothes, and very handsome he looked in the stylish, light-grey costume.

Presently he found himself driving through the approaching sunset along the smooth highway. After a few miles the coach turned into another road which led through a smiling, well-wooded valley, and at the end of an hour reached a tiny hamlet, which could boast of no house of importance enough to look like the dwelling of Frau von Kleuse.

However, though the coachman, being new to Nuremberg, could give no information there was a little inn in sight, and in the entrance stood the fat landlord, who looked good-natured enough to give advice to the traveller. To the eager inquiries of Max he replied at once:

"The ever-to-be-most-highly-esteemed, the so-much-honourable, noble Frau von Kleuse! Of course I know her house—it is not far. The road to the left—but it wants mending. I should advise the Herr to walk. If he passes down my cabbage-patch and across the field and mounts the hill he will see the mansion below him and can go through the fruit-orchard and garden."

The consequence of implicitly following which advice was that in about twenty minutes Max reached the gate of the large, old-fashioned garden, and saw before him the house with a broad terrace that was decorated with pots of flowering shrubs, while beyond several glass doors led into the dwelling itself.

He had come so quickly that he was almost breathless. So to recover himself he sat down on a moss-grown sundial till physically he had cooled off somewhat. Then he rose and walked along the centre garden path till he gained a leafy arbour built directly over it.

He stopped again, for seated in a rustic chair beneath the emerald screen he perceived Lina Holdeniss. She was leaning back, resting her head on her hand, but her brilliant colour and her smiles were gone. She looked pale and dejected, and Max could have sworn that he distinguished the traces of tears upon her cheeks.

Some involuntary movement of his arm caused a rustle among the vines.

Lina raised her eyes and saw him. She started up, made a movement as if to flee, then stood still, looking at him, but as horrified and frightened as if some noxious reptile had suddenly appeared at her feet.

"Fraulein, Fraulein Lina!" he exclaimed. "In Heaven's name, have I frightened you?"

The words died on his lips, for a gust of passionate anger swept across her face, leaving her paler than before. Then he saw what was more inexplicable than her terror, more painful than anger—a slow smile of scorn, of unutterable contempt, wreathed her beautiful lips.

"Frightened?" she repeated, with a wave of her hand, as if brushing off some troublesome insect. "Frightened—of you?"

It seemed to Max as if he must be in some horrible nightmare. This could not be real.

"Fraulein Lina!" he repeated.

"How dare you!" cried she.

Max had a hot temper of his own, and this conduct stirred it somewhat, even amid his confusion.

"My errand must be my excuse for this intrusion," said he, drawing himself up to his fullest height, and looking very stately, though he trembled so that his grandeur was a little paraded. "It was necessary I should come, I could not send. I came to say to your father—to bring your father—"

"Now—then, oh, then, Heaven!" cried Fraulein Lina, her eyes blazing more hotly than before. Then she regarded him from head to foot, and added: "And it is necessary for me to tell you that I find your coming uncalled for—indecent—yes! And I spoke graciously to you at the station yonder. I will never forgive myself—I, oh, what is your visit to me that I should even be angry? My father, you came to see my father; well then, you shall. I will call him. I—"

"Fraulein Lina!" he broke in, interrupting the passionate utterance of her rhodomontade.

"I will call him; do you wait here," said she, imperiously.

She darted out of the arbour and up the terrace steps; and as he, mechanically following, reached them, she fled through one of the open doors and disappeared down the corridor.

Max dropped into the nearest chair and sat utterly confounded, while a new thought disturbed his brain so unutterably terrible that his anger was lost in pity.

"She is mad—she must be," he muttered. "Oh, the poor, beautiful, young creature! Can she be? How else to account for her conduct in the garden, and now here, and her father's anxiety to follow—"

He was interrupted by a voice calling:

"Lina, Lina! Whom were you talking to? What—?"

It was Herr Holdeniss, emerging from an open door lower down the terrace. He was rubbing his hands and yawning in a fashion that showed he had just wakened from a nap. He caught sight of the visitor and exclaimed:

"Herr Ingersoll, or am I asleep still?"

"Yes, it is I," said Max, coming forward, and trying to compose himself. "I beg your pardon for intruding, but I found your letter-case on the station-lawn, so I thought it best to bring it out myself at once."

"How kind of you, how thoughtful," cried Holdeniss; "and I did not even know I had lost it—full of important papers too, what abominable carelessness on my part!"

"I am very glad I happened to see it. I will not disturb your siesta further," said Max, with more than Castilian stateliness.

"What, the deuce! You don't mean to fly off in that fashion," cried the old gentleman, catching his arm. "I'll tell you a secret. My sister-in-law is the best creature living, but crochety. I knew when I told her about you she would bid me invite you; but since you are here do wait. I'll find her and explain."

"No, no, thanks," said Max.

"You must—you shall! And Lina must thank you—"

"Oh, there is no need of that," broke in Max. "I must tell you that just after you left the station I saw your daughter. We spoke, and she was very civil. I met her now, as I came in. I can't imagine how I have offended her. I could not, in the least, comprehend the extraordinary things she told me—"

Herr Holdeniss interrupted, and said to Max:

"Told you? That was odd for her to do. I suppose you'd said I knew your uncle, and so she felt acquainted. I've had no time to mention you. Well, well, no wonder she is upset and vexed. So she told you?"

"Why, the old man is mad too," thought Max.

"And women are such incomprehensible creatures," pursued Herr Holdeniss. "Since she

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has spoken I'd like to tell you the whole. You see, German-like, I thought it my duty to arrange a marriage for her. My old friend, Peter Dornheim, had a son in England. I knew him a little; a handsome fellow; money; good business. I'd no mind to buy my girl a title, and a husband who would despise her and me."

"Hopelessly mad," thought Max.

"So, when Peter and I had settled matters, I told Lina. That's nearly a month ago," continued the father. "She was very rebellious, vowed she should detest the man, but I thought that would wear off. Well, the fellow himself did not write or send a photograph, but Peter said it was all right—"

"Oh," broke in Max, "I must tell you that you misunderstood me. Miss Lina spoke of none of these things."

"No, I suppose she hated to give the details," said Holdeniss, and was deaf when Max tried to explain. "But this morning I got a telegram from the young chap to say that he would be at my house at ten o'clock. I told Lina, and the monkey just put on her hat and ran off here to her aunt," concluded the old gentleman, laughing heartily.

"Oh," ejaculated Max.

"Yes, but she needn't have been so silly. The fellow came to confide a secret. He was married already. Some low match. He is afraid to tell his father yet. He wanted me to take the blame of the breaking off of the proposed alliance upon myself; he admitted he oughtn't to have waited so long to tell me. But, after all, I was rather sorry for him."

"Oh!" was all Max could say.

"But this is the odd part. I told Lina when she got here, and it seems, though she professed to be so averse, and ran away this morning to escape seeing young Dornheim, that she must have been weaving a little romance, for she turned very pale and shut herself up in her room. Hush! here she comes."

But when Lina saw Max she started back, stammering out that she thought her father was alone.

"Don't run away, Lina," said Herr Holdeniss "I want to introduce my friend."

"Your friend?" interrupted Lina, with a scornful laugh. "Oh, there is no necessity for an introduction. Mr. August Dornheim and I have already met twice."

"August Dornheim? What, the deuce," cried her father. "This is a friend of mine, Mr. Max Ingersoll."

Lina's embarrassment was pitiful to see, but she behaved very bravely. She walked up to Max and extended her hand.

"I beg your pardon," said she, "you must have thought me crazy. But I saw you with papa, you called me by my Christian name; my mistake was quite natural."

"Quite," said Max, in high delight; "but I'm glad I'm not Herr Dornheim, for I judge you don't like him."

"I never saw him," said Lina, recovering her dignity.

"To own the truth, Lina," said her father, "I thought you had told Ingersoll, so I've let it all out."

"Papa," cried Lina, half vexed, half laughing. "Well, now, let us never mention the odious, selfish man's name again."

"What, the deuce!" cried her father. "But so, why have you been fretting, or cross, ever since I told you he was married? And, by the way, when you met Ingersoll at the station you thought he was Dornheim. It's lucky you didn't scratch him."

"You hadn't told her then," exclaimed Max, before he knew he was thinking aloud.

Lina's intolerable confusion, as she ran back into the house on a pretence of calling her aunt, was a confession which Max dared not then admit to himself he understood, but which he afterwards did; it was a confession that, mistaking him for the proposed bridegroom, she had felt

that running away to escape him had been a silly thing to do.

Ingersoll stayed a month at Nuremberg, instead of the three days he had expected, and before the enchanted weeks ended such mystery as there was had been fully cleared up.

Max had confided to Lina that he fell in love with her at first sight, and Lina had admitted that when she saw him crossing the station lawn with her father she recognised that her youth had found a hero to realise its dreams. The only mistake she made was in the hero's name, but even intuition must stop somewhere.

THE TWO LOVERS.

Upon the bridge two lovers came;
And one was tall, and one was fair;
And by an elm tree's knotted frame
They stood. The grateful shadows
there

Fell on their forms, and far away;
But each on each was so intent
They did not heed the summer day,
And June's sweet shows which came and
went.

Bright blossoms fringed the river's banks,
And grasses tall swayed to and fro,
And singing birds played pretty pranks;
But not of these they cared to know.

What matter if the world be fair,
Or if the days are stern and rough?
'Tis only love for which they care;
And perfect love is wealth enough.

One seemed to say, "See, down this
stream
Two little barques together go;
I had, last night, a curious dream—
I dreamt that we were floating so;

"And though at times the stream was
rough,
And huge rocks crossed our path in
pride,
We passed all harm with joy enough
In life's long journey side by side."

Just then upon the elm tree flew
A little bird, when, poising high,
He sang a song, as if he knew
The maiden gave a sweet reply!

Soon from the bridge the lovers glide,
Linked hand in hand, till out of sight;
And by the joy on every side,
I half suspect the bird was right.

STATISTICS.

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS OF THE WORLD.—From an interesting collection of journalistic and commercial statistics recently published in the "Newspaper and Bank Directory of the World" we gather that the total number of newspapers and periodicals published during the year 1880 within the circumference of the terrestrial globe was 34,274, and that their combined circulation, roughly computed, amounted to 10,592,000,000, or a little more than six copies per head of our world's population. Europe heads the list with 18,557 "dailies," "weeklies," and "monthlies"; North America follows with 12,400; Asia comes third—but a long way behind—with 775; Australasia fourth with 689; South America fifth with 609; and, last of all, Africa, the "dark Continent," which can only boast of 132 periodicals of all sorts. Anglo-Saxons will rejoice to learn that no fewer than 16,500 of the publications

in the above estimate are printed in their native tongue, destined in all probability to prove the universal language of the future. Of the remaining 17,774 nearly eight thousand are printed in German, about half that number in French, and some 1,600 in Spanish. That ours is a newspaper-reading age is sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that civilised mankind requires to be kept informed of its political and commercial transactions, its crimes, accidents, and amusements, by 4,020 daily papers and 18,274 periodicals appearing from once to thrice a week. The remainder of its periodical literature, chiefly scientific, artistic, and critical, is published in fortnightly, monthly, and quarterly numbers, to the tune of eight thousand five hundred and eight. If the times, as Hamlet asserted, be "out of joint," it is certainly not so for lack of effort, on the part of journalists, to "set it right."

GEMS OF THOUGHT.

In the empire of thought there are many rulers.

PLEASURE may be aptly compared to many very great books, which increase in real value in the proportion they are abridged.

Be deaf to the quarrelsome and dumb to the inquisitive.

If you wish success in life make perseverance your bosom friend, experience your wise counsellor, caution your elder brother, and hope your guardian.

GOODNESS consists not in the outward things we do, but in the inward things we are.

One of the most effectual ways of pleasing and of making one's self loved is to be cheerful; joy softens far more hearts than tears.

TALK to the point and stop when you have reached it. The faculty some possess of making one idea cover a quite of paper is not good for much. Be comprehensive in all you say or write.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

LEMON PUDDING.—One-half pound of bread crumbs, six ounces of suet, six ounces of sugar, the rind of a lemon chopped fine, and the juice. Mix with two eggs, and boil two hours in a buttered mould. Serve with or without wine sauce.

GATEAUX MADEIRAISE.—One pound of sugar, sixteen eggs, half pound butter, three-quarters pound of best flour. Beat the eggs and the sugar together in a bowl; when done mix in the flour, then the butter. Put the paste in small moulds and bake in a warm oven.

FRICASSEE OF CODFISH (TWO POUNDS).—Wash and cut two pounds of fresh codfish in two-inch squares, removing skin and bones; put it over the fire in sufficient cold water to cover it an inch, with one teaspoonful of salt, and let it slowly approach the boiling point; then take it from the water with a skimmer, lay it on a warm dish, cover it with a towel, wet in warm water and place in where it will keep warm without drying. Strain the water in which the fish was boiled and use one pint of it, together with one tablespoonful each of butter and flour, to make a white sauce, first melting together the butter and flour, and then gradually stirring in the water; season the sauce palatably with salt and pepper, put the fish into it, and heat it until the flakes begin to separate; then remove the saucepan from the fire; stir in the beaten yolk of one egg and a tablespoonful of vinegar; if parsley is obtainable add one tablespoonful chopped fine. Serve at once. Toast or two-inch slices of fried bread may accompany the dish. Three tablespoonfuls of salad-oil may be added to the sauce with the vinegar if desired. Halibut and bass are excellent when cooked in this way.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. CONSTANT READER.—There are about two and a half perches in a piece of ground of the dimensions you state.

E. S. R. L.—We cannot hear of the plant.

ARTHUR G.—It is not polite to employ abbreviations in letters. The practice was in use about a century ago, but is now universally discontinued.

ANXIOUS ONE.—The widow is liable for the debt, but you could not take her "little furniture" in discharge without proper process of law, nor should we advise you to do so if you could.

F. S. H.—Neither a doctor nor a solicitor is necessary. The will should be signed at the foot in the presence of two witnesses, who afterwards sign their own names. No one who is mentioned as a legatee should sign as witness, as the legacy would become forfeited.

A. C. S.—It depends upon the author and nature of the book. As a general rule books of the latter part of the seventeenth century are not worth much. You had better write to some second-hand bookseller to inquire what he would bid for it—say to Messrs. Walford, 320, Strand, London, W.C., who would probably purchase it.

HORON.—The diet you mention would probably strengthen your general health, but could have no special effect on the growth of your hair—no farther, at least, than what improved health may cause. With regard to the other matter we should not consider twenty-seven too old for a lady to become engaged. These matters must evidently depend entirely upon circumstances, such as the age of the fiancé, etc.

E. W.—The children of first cousins are second cousins. Let us suppose, for instance, that John and James are first cousins. Then their boys, whom we will call Jack and Jim, are second cousins. But Jack is first cousin once removed to James, and Jim is first cousin once removed to John.

L. G.—The feudal system was that under which Europe was governed in the middle ages. The land was divided among the barons, who kept retinues of fighting men, and did as they chose on their own territory, often making war on each other. Their principal service to the king or higher feudal lord was to supply him with a certain number of properly equipped soldiers when he went to war. Happily the system is now extinct.

H. M.—The only preparation you can make for the stage, besides getting a good general education, is to study elocution and cultivate the voice. There is no routine way of learning acting. Actors and actresses usually have their profession forced on them by their birth and surroundings. Few professions are more crowded, demand more labour, and give fewer returns than an actor's.

W. S.—To remove stains from zinc, use glycerine mixed with diluted sulphuric acid.

W. M.—The mothers of Enoch and Enos were the wives of Cain and Seth, the sons of Adam and Eve. Their names are not mentioned in the Bible. From the nature of the case we infer that they were of the family of Adam and Eve, and the exceptional circumstances in which they were placed made a marriage proper which afterwards was forbidden.

H. R. W.—If the ink is really common writing ink you can restore it by painting over it, with a camel's hair brush, a solution of gallic acid. Another method is to apply, in the same manner, a solution of potassic ferrocyanide, or, as it is sometimes called, the yellow prussiate of potash. But common writing ink is seldom used to mark cloth.

E. G. B.—If a silver wedding is to be observed at all the gifts should be either silver or silver-plated. If your friendship is of a formal, indifferent character, it might be appropriately expressed by a gift of plated ware. But if it is of the genuine, solid kind, and has the ring of true metal, then let it be represented by articles of genuine, solid silver.

A. P.—Imitation diamond dust is merely clear white quartz pebbles, or rock crystal, broken up in an iron mortar. If you want a little to experiment on you can procure a few of the crystals, wrap them in soft paper, and break them with a hammer on a piece of iron.

M. A.—Erie-a-brac is a phrase used to describe a class of articles having some beauty, and interesting on account of age, or the appearance of age. Armour,

curious weapons, carved ivory, and quaint old furniture, all come under this head.

W. B. H.—Fra Diavolo (Brother Devil) was the sobriquet of Michele Pezza, a native of Calabria. According to some accounts he was in early life a goatherd, afterwards a monk, under the name of Fra Angelo. Others say that he was a stockinger. Escaping from the workshop or monastery, he joined a band of robbers, and soon became their leader. On the arrival of the French, he declared for the king of Naples, and in 1799 received pardon and office from Cardinal Ruffo, organised his band, and made an incursion into the Roman territory. Subsequently he went to Palermo, where he took part in an insurrection under the leadership of Commodore Sidney Smith. Being taken prisoner by treachery at St. Severino, he was hanged at Naples in November, 1806, notwithstanding the intercession of the English on his behalf, prompted by respect for his military prowess. He has been made the subject of various traditions and songs, and of an opera by Anber, entitled "Fra Diavolo," in which, however, nothing of the character but the name has been retained.

MY VALENTINE.

As I went down my garden,
Before the dew was dry,
Along the road to Hawarden
A lovely lass came by—
Her cheek was rosy, rosy—
Blue, blue her eye;
I offered her a posy,
And she did not deny.

Fanny, panny—
Yellow, white and blue—
She has won my fancy
Far away with you.

So much I mused about her
I could not sleep o' night,
And one month without her
Left me weak and white;
Till Hily-o'-the-valley
Her leaves did decline,
And forth I must sally
To seek my Valentine.

Fanny, panny—
Yellow, white and blue—
She has won my fancy
Far away with you.

But at last I found her
Alone in a wood,
With linnets warbling round her
Would do your heart good.
Her cheek no more was rosy,
With wee her eyes were wet,
And to her lips a posy
Of faded flowers was set.
Fanny, panny—
Yellow, white and blue—
Have I won her fancy
She so favours you?

Toward her I hastened
And told my loving tale.
She saw my form was wasted,
She saw my cheek was pale;
And blushing rosy, rosy,
She sighed in my ear,
"The day I took your posy
You took my heart's-ease, dear."
Fanny, panny,
Wherever I go,
You shall be my fancy
Of all the flowers that blow.

PUZZLES.

XLVI.

SQUARE WORDS.

1. A bird. A bird. To prevent. Pluck. To go in.
2. A bird. A bet. A town of Moravia. A banquet. Veracity.
3. A bird. A man's name. To happen. Of a pleasing manner. To have done wrong.

XLVII.

DIAMOND PUZZLE.

A letter, a fish, and a well-known tree,
A magistrate, and a Spanish writer we see;
Next follows a wind, and then a small cane,
A number, and then a letter again.
Read down and across, an author you'll see
Of a very famed novel—a Spaniard was he.

XLVIII.

ANIMALS ENIGMATICALLY EXPRESSED.

1. An insect, and to run away. 2. A serpent and a consonant. 3. A kind of doctor and the end of August. 4. A man devoted to religion and two-thirds of an optic. 5. A man's name and everything. 6. A firearm, transposed. 7. Leather and a plant, curtailed. 8. A fruit or vegetable, transposed. 9. A prop, transposed, and three letters from dark. 10. What a river does, transposed. 11. A thousand and a flower, transposed. 12. Half a flower, a fish, and a falsehood, transposed.

XLIX.

CROSSWORD.

In bandbox, not in trunk;
In eye, not in face;
In sleep, not in drunk;
In embroidery, not in lace;
In play, not in toy;
In hug, not in squeeze;
In man, not in boy;
In eggs, not in cheese;
In room, not in hall;
In truth, not in falsehood;
In some, not in all;
The total is feeding on wood.

L.

CHARADES.

1.

My first is merely half,
My second is quite round;
Both combined, my second of
A half there will be found.

2.

My first is very dear to me,
Although he's rather wild;
How oft I've nursed him on my knee
When he was a little child.
My second is a useful link
To join my first to second,
And by all scholars is, I think,
A preposition reckon'd.
My third some people dabble in,
But often trouble find;
They're sure in it to lose or win
If all are of one mind.
My whole was given unto me
Upon my marriage day.
Now, riddling friends, what can I be?
Come, tell to me, I pray.

LI.

DECAPITATION.

A little pig if you behead,
A plant you will have instead;
Behead again, and then I ween,
On Labrador's coast I am seen.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES.

XLII.

1. Hat, Het, hit, hot. 2. Tan, tea, tin, ton, tan.
3. Ban, Ben, bin, box, bun.

XLIII.

Night-mare.

XLIV.

L O P A T K A
C R E M O N A
L U C E R N E
A M E R I C A
P A C I F I C
K A M C H I K
B A V A R I A

XLV.

1. Eye. 2. Level. 3. Mill.

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